

DRAFT

Snohomish County Park and Recreation Element

A COMPONENT OF THE GMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Snohomish County Department of Parks & Recreation

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Preface

This Park and Recreation Element (Park Element) is a component of Snohomish County's Growth Management Act (GMA) Comprehensive Plan and is prepared in accordance with requirements specified in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.070. Snohomish County's Comprehensive Plan is comprised of five separate documents (or sections) that work together to guide county actions. This Park Element is one of these sections and works together with the General Policy Plan (GPP) and Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) to guide long term provision of facilities managed by the Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks).

This Park Element provides the basis for creation of the Snohomish County Park Improvement Plan (PIP), which identifies short term actions and funding strategies to achieve the goals, objectives, policies, direction and recommendations of the GPP, CFP and Park Element. The PIP is a component of the annual 6-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and is also influenced by the Snohomish County Park and Recreation Visioning Plan (PRVP) which identifies short-term public interest in provision of parks.

Planning content required by the GMA is focused within this Park Element, but is also contained in other documents. The location of each of these required components is provided below. Sources located outside of this document are italicized.

Table 1. GMA Park Planning Required Content Summary

GMA Park and Recreation Element Requirements RCW 36.70A.070(8)	
A park and recreation element that implements, and is consistent with the capital facilities plan element as it relates to park and recreation facilities. The element shall include:	
Requirement	Location
(a) Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period	Chapter II. Park and Recreation Demand and Need
(b) An evaluation of facilities and service needs	Chapter II. Park and Recreation Demand and Need

(c) An evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand	Chapter I. Introduction
GMA Capital Facilities Plan Element Requirements RCW 36.70A.070(3) A capital facilities (including park and recreation facilities) plan element consisting of:	
(a) An inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, showing the locations and capacities of the capital facilities	<i>Snohomish County Park Inventory Report</i> Appendix B – Facilities Provided by Other Jurisdictions
(b) A forecast of the future needs for such capital facilities	Chapter II. Park and Recreation Demand and Need
(c) The proposed locations and capacities of expanded or new capital facilities	Chapter IV. Recommended Park Improvements <i>Snohomish County Annual Capital Improvement Program</i>
(d) At least a six-year plan that will finance such capital facilities within projected funding capacities and clearly identified sources of public money for such purposes	<i>Snohomish County Annual Capital Improvement Program</i>
(e) A requirement to reassess the land use element if probable funding falls short of meeting existing needs and to ensure that the land use element, capital facilities plan element, and financing plan within the capital facilities plan element are coordinated and consistent.	<i>Snohomish County Capital Facility Plan</i>

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Glossary of Acronyms

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

CIP – Capital Improvement Program

CPP – Countywide Planning Policies for Snohomish County

DNR – Washington State Department of Natural Resources

FLUM – Future Land Use Map

GPP – General Policy Plan

GMA – Growth Management Act

LOS – Level-of-Service

MPP – Multicounty Planning Policies

MUGA – Municipal Urban Growth Area

NPDES – National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

NRPA – National Recreation and Park Association

OFM – Washington State Office of Financial Management

PDS – Snohomish County Department of Planning and Development Services

PSRC – Puget Sound Regional Council

PUD – Snohomish County Public Utility District Number 1

QR – Quick Response

RCO – Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office

RCW – Revised Code of Washington

REET - Real Estate Excise Tax

SCT – Snohomish County Tomorrow

SOAP – Sustainable Operation Action Plan

SWM – Snohomish County Surface Water Management (a division of the Public Works Department)

UGA – Urban Growth Area

WAC – Washington Administrative Code

I. Introduction

Parks' Mission Statement:

“Provide safe, enjoyable, attractive parks and diverse programs with responsive services which enhance our quality of life and preserve the natural and recreational resources of Snohomish County.”

A. Purpose of the Park and Recreation Element

The Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) is pleased to present the 2015 Snohomish County Park and Recreation Element (Park Element). As Parks looks back on over fifty years of operation, this Park Element provides a chance to review progress toward achieving Parks' mission, look ahead to future needs and identify strategies for continuing to realize Parks' mission.

This Park Element is a component of Snohomish County's Growth Management Act (GMA) Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan), and is prepared pursuant to Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of five separate documents, which are: the General Policy Plan (GPP), Future Land Use Map (FLUM), Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), Transportation Element and the Park Element. In previous years, park planning content required by GMA was included in a Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan, which addressed both RCW requirements as well as planning requirements provided by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The RCO is a major grant funding source for park projects and meeting RCO planning requirements helps maintain eligibility for their programs. A separate Park and Recreation Visioning Plan (PRVP) and Park Inventory Report (PIR) have been created which specifically address RCO planning requirements and document Parks' inventory, respectively. This Park Element is now focused entirely on addressing GMA and RCW based planning requirements.

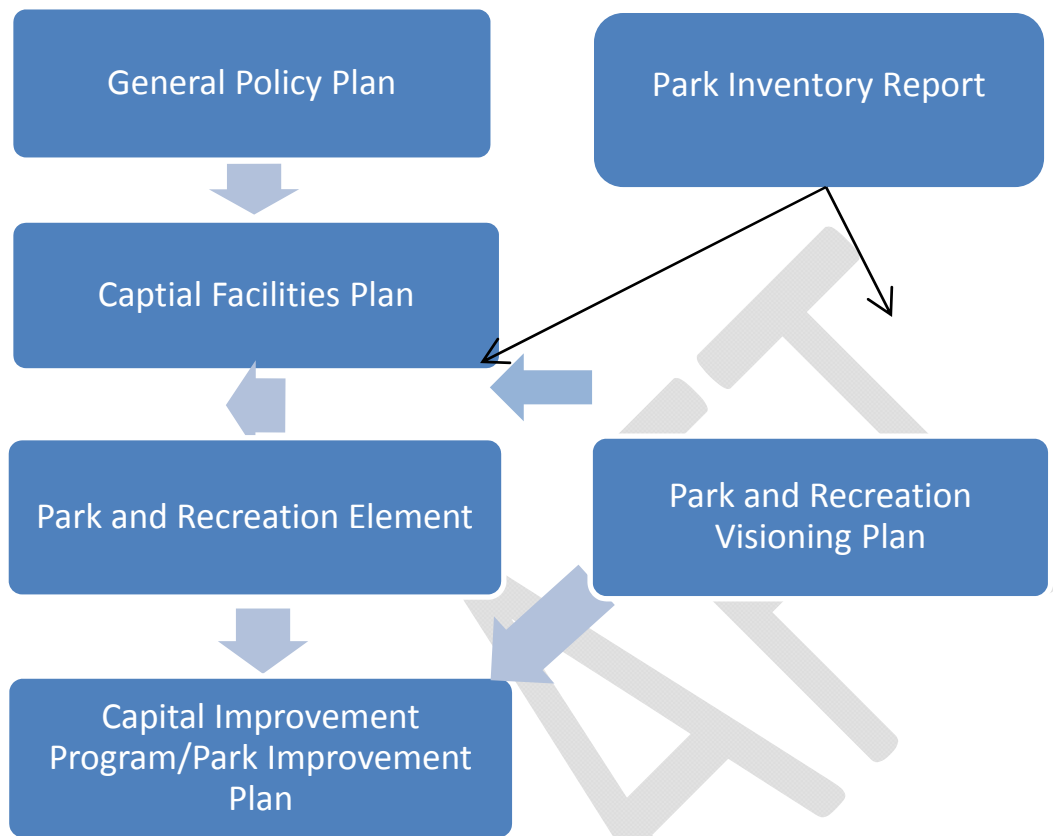
The Park Element works together with the GPP and CFP to provide a long-term strategy for providing

park facilities through 2035. The annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is created based upon these documents and identifies specific short-term projects to receive funding. The CIP is updated annually and addresses a 6-year planning duration. A separate Park Improvement Plan (PIP) is adopted as a component of the CIP and provides further information on individual park projects.

The PRVP contains significant information on public priorities and an overall vision for provision of park facilities that helps guide creation of the Park Element as well as the CIP and PIP. The PRVP is updated at least every six years and provides periodic review of public satisfaction with park facilities and identification of recreation priorities. Parks is committed to including the public in planning for parks and this process allows for consideration of emergent needs and reprioritization based on public interests.

The relationship between these park planning documents is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Park Planning Documents



B. Growth Management Act Requirements

The GMA was enacted by the Washington State Legislature in 1990 in response to rapid state-wide growth and uncoordinated and unplanned development, which led to concerns about impacts to the environment, quality of life and other related issues. The overarching goal of GMA is to coordinate planning efforts and establish Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) in which to focus population expansion. The GMA is codified in RCW 36.70A and addresses 12 major goals to “guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations...” (RCW 36.70A.020). Of these goals, the following are most closely related to the development of this Park Element:

1. Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services

exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.

3. Transportation. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans.
5. Economic development. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses, recognize regional differences impacting economic development opportunities, and encourage growth in areas experiencing insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities.
9. Open space and recreation. Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop park and recreation facilities.
10. Environment. Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
11. Citizen participation and coordination. Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
12. Public facilities and services. Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
13. Historic preservation. Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

GMA requirements specific to development of Park and Recreation Elements are provided in RCW 36.70A.070(8). These requirements are listed in the Preface section of this document, along with identification of where content satisfying the requirements are located. This Park Element is also structured to address the majority of GMA requirements for development of Capital Facilities Plans, as they relate to park facilities. GMA requirements for Capital Facilities Plans are also listed in the Preface section of this document, along with identification of where park related content satisfying these requirements is provided.

The GMA requires that jurisdictions planning under the act consider projected demand and need for at least a ten-year period and identify funding to meet that need. The identification of need is to be based upon an evaluation of current inventory, projected demand, opportunities for intergovernmental coordination and evaluation of facilities required to meet that need. Recommendations for implementation of this process are contained within the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) for Park and Recreation and Capital Facilities Elements (365-196-440 and 365-196-415 respectively). Specific to creation of the Park Element, the WAC recommends that the process be started with a visioning exercise to “...engage the public in the process of identifying needs, evaluating their satisfaction with existing recreational opportunities, and developing goals to guide the development of the parks and recreation element.” (Washington State, 2010) The results of this visioning process are contained within the PRVP and help guide creation of this document.

C. Policy Foundation

This Park Element is based upon, and consistent with, policies provided in the GPP, Snohomish County Tomorrow Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) and Puget Sound Regional Council Multicounty Planning Policies (MPP). These three sources represent different layers of geographic consideration and range from planning for the Central Puget Sound Region (King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties), to Snohomish County boundaries (including cities, towns and tribal areas), to unincorporated Snohomish County alone.

Multicounty Planning Policies

MPP are provided by the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and are located within a document titled *Vision 2040*, which was adopted in December 2009 (Puget Sound Regional Council, 2009). This document was created to provide “...an integrated, long-range vision for maintaining a healthy region – promoting the well-being of people and communities, economic vitality, and a healthy environment” (Puget Sound Regional Council). The PSRC provides multicounty policies for the central Puget Sound region, which includes Snohomish, King, Pierce and Kitsap Counties. Policies are provided in the areas of:

- Environment
- Development patterns
- Land use
- Orderly development and design
- Housing
- Economy
- Transportation
- Public services
- General policies (e.g. updates to policies, monitoring, etc.)

The MPP are used to guide and inform both countywide policies, which are provided by Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT), and county-specific policies, which are contained within the GPP.

Countywide Planning Policies for Snohomish County

The most recent compilation of the CPP was adopted in 2011 and was developed by Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT), a forum comprised of representatives from the nineteen Snohomish County cities and towns, Snohomish County and the Tulalip Tribes. The objective of this group is to develop policies for the purpose of encouraging consistency between city and county comprehensive planning. The CPP is adopted by Snohomish County Council and is periodically updated, as needed.

The CPP does not include specific policies related to parks and recreation, but policies are provided related to the natural environment, economic development, transportation and public services and facilities, all of which relate to provision of parks in some way. The function of the document is “[To] more clearly distinguish between the roles and responsibilities of the county, cities, Tribes, state and other governmental agencies in managing Snohomish County’s future growth, and to ensure greater interjurisdictional cooperation and coordination in the provision of services” (Snohomish County Tomorrow, 1990).

Snohomish County General Policy Plan

The GPP is based upon, and consistent with the MPP and CPP. The GPP provides county-specific policy direction and includes a separate chapter specific to provision of park facilities. Goals, objectives and policies are provided within this chapter and provide guidance on: interjurisdictional coordination, specific park classifications, facility provision and use, level-of-service standards, land acquisition, open space/natural areas, recreation programs, cultural resources and long-term viability. This chapter most specifically guides formation of this Park Element.

In addition to the park chapter of the GPP, other goals, objectives and policies provided within the Population and Employment, Land Use, Transportation, Economic Development, Natural Environment, and Interjurisdictional Coordination chapters relate to, and guide portions of this Park Element.

D. Capital Facility Plan

The goal of the CFP is to establish and track level-of-service standards for capital facilities identified as ‘necessary to support development,’ forecast new or expanded facilities needed to support population growth and provide the basis for the 6-year CIP. The Park Element is a component of the CFP and addresses the above stated goal and RCW Capital Facility Plan requirements, as they relate to park facilities. The CFP provides a summary of the Park Element, and identifies this document as the source for park related capital facility planning. The RCW requirement to reassess the land use element if funding projections are anticipated to fall short of funding needs continues to be located within the CFP. In order to track the progress of the county in meeting level-of-service standards, an annual Statement of Assessment is issued, reporting actual level-of-service provision for facilities identified as ‘necessary to support development.’

E. Inventory

Park Inventory Report

A complete listing of properties managed by Parks is provided within the PIR. Parks’ inventory changes regularly so is contained in a separate document that can be updated as needed (an annual update is anticipated to be typically completed). A summary matrix is provided within the PIR which lists each

park facility alphabetically and includes information on classification and general amenities. The PIR also includes an overview map, showing distribution of county parks throughout the county, as well as individual park maps and site information. Analysis contained within this Park Element is based on the December 2013 PIR.

Recreation Facilities Provided by Others

A map showing recreation facilities provided by other jurisdictions is located in Appendix B of this document. This map identifies state, city and town provided parks, Washington State Department of Natural Resource (DNR) and United States Forest Service holdings as well as school sites, which often provide recreational features that are used by the public. This information is provided to show the total availability of recreation opportunities in Snohomish County.

Bicycle Facility System

The Snohomish County Department of Public Works (Public Works) maintains a Bicycle Facility System map, which identifies existing and planned bikeways, which can be separated, multi-use trails such as the Centennial, Interurban and Whitehorse Trails, designated on-street bicycle lanes, designated routes on widened county road shoulders and streets, and roads with shared roadway use that do not include special markings or signs. Public Works' system integrates Parks' current and planned trails data and helps identify connections between Parks provided trails and Public Works provided bike routes. Public Works generally maintains management over bike facilities that are located within county right-of-way and are directly connected to the roadway system. Parks' management of facilities within this system is typically for trail routes that are separated from the roadway system and are designed for multi-modal use. Overlap between these two types of corridors does occur and Parks and Public Works often collaborate on facilities that address priorities of both Departments. Parks coordinates with Public Works to identify trail/bicycle facility needs and make connections between the systems, as appropriate.

Park Classifications

Parks utilizes a classification scheme, which is based on several factors, including park location, size, access and service area. Providing a classification system park lands is not a requirement of the GMA,

but it does help Parks group properties according to their use and management and provides a means of evaluating the provision and distribution of different types of recreation facilities. It is understood that individual parks may function as more than one classification type, especially for residents located in close proximity to the park, but the classifications are intended to represent the more generalized use of the facility. The categories Parks uses are as follows: Neighborhood, Community, Regional, Open Space/Preserve, Special Use and Trails.

The following classification descriptions have been refined from those used in the 2007 Snohomish County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan, in order to provide clearer definitions of the groups. This refinement has triggered some parks to change classification, or classifications of some parks may have changed because the factors used to define them may have changed (e.g. UGA boundaries). Similarly, the classification of some undeveloped park sites may have changed since the 2007 Snohomish County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan, based on a revised vision of what those properties are anticipated to be used for.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood Parks are generally smaller facilities that are located within residential areas and/or UGAs and are typically accessible by foot. These parks provide open space for nearby residents and are often a focal point for the neighborhood. Recreational activities in Neighborhood Parks are variable and may include multiple features, or the park may be limited to a single feature, such as playground or soft surface trail. In some instances, Neighborhood Parks may not provide public access, and primarily serve to provide open space, but because of their location within developed areas, they serve a neighborhood function. The county encourages and promotes the transfer of Neighborhood Parks in incorporated and UGAs or to the cities or towns within whose boundaries, or potential annexation area, they are located.

Neighborhood Parks are typically of smaller size, although the current average size of a Neighborhood Parks is 21 acres. This higher average is a reflection of several properties included within this classification that are larger, open space, parcels (specifically Chevron Parkland at 150.7 acres and Darlington Beach at 51.46 acres). Developed Neighborhood Parks are typically smaller, such as Sunset

Park at .27 acres and Locust Way at 7.08 acres. The reduced size of developed Neighborhood Parks often limits the number of amenities offered at these facilities. Because Neighborhood Parks are located in residential areas, access, if provided, is predominately by foot and limited parking is offered. A generally defined service area for Neighborhood Parks is ¼ mile.

Examples of Neighborhood Parks include: Fircrest and Locust Way Parks.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community Parks provide the setting for community activities and provide recreational opportunities for both children and adults. Recreational features in Community Parks are typically a mix of types and are selected based upon community input and on an effort to provide both passive and active recreational opportunities. Typical Community Park amenities include picnic tables, benches, shelters, open play, playgrounds, trails, ballfields and sport courts.

Community Parks are typically located in incorporated areas, UGAs, or in areas expected to become UGAs at some point, although exceptions to this guideline exist. The average size of a Community Park is 32 acres, but in some instances, a Community Park may be smaller if, for example, it is provided in a densely developed area, or if it provides waterfront access. Because Community Parks are typically located in urban areas, access to the park may be via foot, car or public transportation. Community Parks are generally considered to serve residents residing within a 5-mile radius.

Examples of Community Parks include: Silver Creek, Lake Stevens and Tambark Creek Parks.

REGIONAL PARKS

Regional parks are typically identified by unique features or amenities that attract users from a wide area. Regional parks provide the opportunity for individuals to get out and enjoy a longer duration park visit and often offer the opportunity to experience some of the fantastic natural features of Snohomish County. These parks may be located anywhere in the county and typically include a feature such as a

boat launch, water access, camping or equestrian facilities. These parks offer destination recreation and the amenities provided are sometimes fee-based (e.g. camping and boat launches). The size of a Regional Park and its primary route of access are inconsequential to these types of parks, as it is the features and service area which predominantly define this classification. Because of this definition, Regional Parks are considered to serve residents from all over the county.

Examples of Snohomish County Regional Parks include: Kayak Point (providing saltwater access, motorized boat launch and camping) and Lord Hill Park (providing numerous equestrian trails).

OPEN SPACE/PRESERVE

Open Space/Preserve parks focus on preserving wilderness, special natural areas or wildlife habitat, and/or unique qualities of open space. Preservation of open space has innumerable benefits to our community, including habitat values, carbon sequestration, and others (see Appendix A – The Benefits of Parks). Such areas are often planned for preservation in their natural state and management plans for these sites are focused on protecting natural habitat values while providing access to the public, when appropriate. Access to Open Space/Preserve Parks is determined on a case-by-case basis, but is provided whenever possible in order to provide contact with natural environments, promote the importance of open space, educate the public about habitat values and promote an appreciation for natural spaces. These parks remain essentially unimproved and development is limited to that which is appropriate to support the level of public access provided to the property.

Open Space/Preserve properties may be located anywhere in the county (incorporated or unincorporated) and amenities, if any, typically affect a small portion of the property. Access to Open Space/Preserve properties will vary upon location and may be via foot, if located near development, or via car if located more remotely. A service area for Open Space/Preserve Parks is not commonly defined, but benefits of these properties typically include provision of habitat functions, open space preservation, air quality improvement, stormwater infiltration, flood attenuation in some cases, as well as other benefits.

Examples of Open Space/Preserve properties include: the Snohomish River Estuary and Southwest County Park.

SPECIAL USE

Special Use Parks typically have one dominant, specialized amenity that users are willing to travel for. These parks most commonly serve that portion of the population which is interested in the amenity the facility offers. However, these types of facilities also often have potential for revenue generation, which can be used to support the larger park system. Examples of Special Use Parks include: Kayak Point Golf Course, the Darrington Archery Range and a recently reconveyed property outside Sultan, which was acquired for the purpose of developing a shooting range. Special Use facilities may be located anywhere in the county and access to these sites is variable, depending on location. The size of these parks is also variable and needs to be of sufficient size to support the provided amenity. A service area is not defined for these types of facilities.

TRAILS

The Trails classification applies to 'linear parks' that provide regional connections for walkers, bicyclists, equestrians and hikers. Trails offer immense recreation opportunities and encourage active lifestyles and alternative transportation use. Trails are immensely popular and are the top feature requested by park users, both at the state and county level. Trails may compliment or provide opportunities to interconnect with existing or proposed federal, state and local community trail systems or destinations. Trails often provide staging areas, rest/picnic areas, trailheads and interpretive stations.

Parks in the Trails classification may be located anywhere in the county, but to be included in this classification, these facilities should extend at least one mile and have a preferable minimum width of 12 feet. Trails in this classification are often rail conversion properties, rail-banked, or, in the case of a recent Centennial Trail segment acquisition, trail and rail corridor together. This segment is planned to be developed as Snohomish County's first rails-with-trails project with continued active rail use. The service area for Trail facilities is considered to be countywide as users often travel within the county to use them.

Snohomish County currently has three ‘linear parks’ that are included in the Trails classification. These are the Centennial Trail, the Whitehorse Trail and the Interurban Trail.

Classification Changes

The classification system described above is utilized as a management tool and classifications of individual parks may change due to a variety of factors. Some reasons that a park classification may change include:

- Change in use of the facility – For example, the facility may draw users from a wider or narrower distance than originally intended, or access may be provided to a facility that was historically used for open space provision only.
- Change in planned use of the facility – A particular facility may have previously been envisioned for a specific use, which then changed due to shifting priorities, new opportunities, or emerging needs.
- Incorporation of the facility into urban areas – As city limits and UGAs expand, growth may encompass a park that had previously been located in a more rural area.

Active and Passive Facilities

The terms ‘active’ and ‘passive’ are used often when describing recreational amenities and are intended to group park features into different recreational experience types. The RCO uses the term ‘active’ to describe muscle powered recreation. Parks has more traditionally used the term ‘active’ to describe recreational experiences which require equipment to enjoy (e.g. ballfields) and which generally produce an elevated heart rate, but has not provided a formalized definition of what ‘active’ means. For purposes of clarity, Parks considers ‘active’ and ‘passive’ recreation to mean the following:

Active – Active recreation amenities are amenities which generally promote an elevated heart rate, when used. Amenities which are considered to be active, include: ballfields, sport courts, playgrounds and equestrian facilities.

Passive – Passive recreation amenities are amenities which do not generally promote an elevated heart rate when used. Amenities which are considered to be passive include: picnic facilities, off-leash dog areas, amphitheaters and community gardens. Park based trails are also included as passive facilities although it is acknowledged that use of trails certainly can promote increased heart rate.

Condition of Facilities

Many of the facilities in the Snohomish County Park system were developed in the 1960's and 1970's and have reached the point of needing renovation. Parks that fall into this category include: Kayak Point, Flowing Lake, Wenberg, the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, River Meadows, and Squire Creek. Interestingly, this list of aging parks also includes the entire list of camping facilities, which are a profit center for the department. Due to the age of these facilities, repairs at these parks are increasingly common and Parks' campgrounds do not always include the modern amenities campers are looking for (e.g. increased power, internet access and larger camp sites). Typical on-going repairs at aging facilities include water and power issues, asphalt cracking, and stormwater related concerns. Larger issues related to these older facilities also often include awkward Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) retrofits and lack of stormwater treatment. Renovations are needed at these facilities to replace aging infrastructure, to fully incorporate ADA accessibility and to address stormwater treatment and detention, all to support the goals of providing a quality visitor experience, operating in a sustainable manner and of reducing operation costs and maintenance needs.

The age of the Evergreen State Fairgrounds (Fairgrounds) presents a particular concern. Buildings at this facility (besides the Shanahan cabin, which dates to 1900) range in date of construction from 1948 to the addition of the Gary D. Weikel Event Center in 2011. Over half of the main structures were built before 1980, including significant buildings such as the Grandstands, Commercial Building and Indoor Arena. A Redevelopment Initiative was developed for the Fairgrounds and identified building and facility challenges including "the lack of usable space of several buildings, the impacts of deferred maintenance on existing buildings, and the lack of capital funding resources to upgrade, replace and/or develop buildings and facilities" (Snohomish County Department of Parks & Recreation, 2009). The Fairgrounds include approximately fifty-four buildings, seven of which were recommended for demolition in the Redevelopment Initiative. In 2011, three of these structures were demolished and

replaced with a single, open span, multipurpose building, utilizing federal recovery zone economic development bonds, which are being paid back with revenue from rental of the facility. Construction of this new building has initiated efforts to reinvest in the Fairgrounds, although funding for future, needed upgrades has not been identified at this time. Currently, an updated master plan is being completed for the Fairgrounds and is anticipated to identify priority needs for renovation.

Another facility which presents unique problems due to its age is the pool at McCollum Park. McCollum Pool has been a popular amenity for the South Everett/Mill Creek community since the late 1960's. McCollum Park is a beautiful natural setting for this outdoor pool and many citizens have passionate memories of the facility and feel a strong attachment to this venue. McCollum Pool has been maintained so the typical pool-user is not aware of many problems with the facility. However, the pool does show signs of deterioration and parts for the pool's failing mechanical systems were assessed in 2011 to have less than five year's life remaining. Many users do notice that the pool house is showing its age and that the pool liner/shell is facing eminent structural failure. Repairs to the pool are complicated due to the siting of the facility. Originally built on an old landfill, the area is continually settling, compromising the park and pool. Restrictions on how landfills can be used also complicate considerations of replacement of this facility.

The age of the Parks system also means that modern efficiencies in power fixtures and building components are not necessarily incorporated into all facilities. For example, newer light fixtures can reduce power needs, as can on-demand water heaters and improved insulation and windows. Low-flow toilets and targeted irrigation systems can reduce water consumption. Piecemeal retrofits have been made at some parks as the opportunity has presented itself, but whole-facility renovations are needed to incorporate efficiencies and reduce overall operating impacts, while reducing maintenance needs associated with maintaining older infrastructure.

In the interest of improving efficiencies, Parks has explored a naturalization program, which is intended to reduce maintenance inputs at park facilities and also to reduce environmental impacts associated with park operations. At Kayak Point Regional Park, for example, several edge areas exist which are not used by the public, but are currently mown. Some of these lawn areas could be replaced with shrubs or let grow long and be cut back only one or two times a year, instead of the weekly mowings that they

currently receive. This change would reduce staff time required to maintain the park, reduce carbon emissions from maintenance equipment and increase space available for wildlife use, all with minimal impact to the park user. Implementation and expansion of this program will require a site-by-site analysis to identify areas suitable for inclusion in the program and evaluate potential user impacts, in order to develop a plan for execution. The benefits of this type of effort are significant and should be pursued as staff becomes available to develop plans.

Parks tracks performance measures for 'meeting service standards,' 'number of citizens visiting county parks,' 'number of new or enhanced amenities available to the public' and 'number of participants in recreation/education programs.' These measurements are compiled and made available through Snohomish County's SnoStat Performance Measure system and are reported on a monthly basis (Snohomish County). Of the four performance measures listed above, 'meeting service standards' directly relates to park facility condition. The benchmark/target set for this measurement is for 80% of park facilities to meet service standards. Service standards take into account facility safety, cleanliness, attractiveness and if the facility is effectively maintained. In 2011, Parks' facilities met the defined benchmark/target eleven out of twelve months in spite of the aging condition of many of Parks' facilities.

Capacity of Facilities

In addition to tracking the condition of Parks' facilities with the SnoStat Performance Measurement system, the number of park visitors is tracked on a monthly basis as well. In 2013, the total number of estimated visitors at Parks facilities was 4,822,487. This includes attendees at the annual fair at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds. Attendance at parks is greatly affected by weather and peak usage typically occurs during the months of May through September. Capacity of individual parks is based on accessibility of the facility (is it open to the public), size of the park, classification (i.e. use) and amenities provided. Information on each park is included in the PIR addressing these points. 'At capacity' is occasionally reached in Parks' facilities and is the point at which parking areas are full and the park is closed to additional entrants. This happens occasionally and typically occurs at water access parks during hot weather. In 2013, Kayak Point Park was closed 12 times to day-use access and camping at the park was reserved at a rate 93.55 site nights. Given that typical campground site night rates for our

area range from 55 – 70, this represents extremely high usage of these facilities.

F. Intergovernmental Coordination

As a part of the process of development of this Park Element, a Snohomish County recreation providers' group initiated meetings in 2011 to discuss shared priorities for providing services, common challenges and opportunities for interjurisdictional coordination. Participants in these discussions included the county, cities and the YMCA. School districts, Washington State Parks, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Boys & Girls Club were also invited to attend, but have not participated yet. The recreation providers' group is working to seek efficiencies and to work together toward common goals.

SCT is another interjurisdictional coordination effort that works at the policy level (CPP) to identify areas of focus for the different members and coordinate on larger topics of concern within the county. The CPP provide specific policies including the incorporation of UGA/Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA) plans into comprehensive planning as, well as encouraging joint planning and development of interlocal agreements.

Through the recreation providers' group meetings, SCT efforts and on-going considerations of funding changes (cutbacks) within the Washington State budget, a number of key points pertinent to interjurisdictional coordination have emerged-

- There is benefit in coordinating, where appropriate, to increase efficiencies in recreation provision and create larger benefit by integrating recreation systems.
- Cities and YMCAs are strong program providers and typically provide sports programs, camps, etc.
- Every jurisdiction is struggling with funding issues, both for development and ongoing maintenance and operation, as well as staffing levels due to wide-spread cutbacks.
- Washington State Parks continues to consider changes to their budget and staffing model, which

may affect State Park provision. State Parks is not considering any park closures at this time, but there may be opportunities to work together in order to coordinate park services.

- Snohomish County UGA/MUGA plans shall be taken into consideration when planning for facilities within those jurisdictions.
- Cities within whose UGA/MUGA boundaries parks are planned should be invited to participate in facility planning, funding and operation efforts.
- Opportunities for property transfer may be appropriate when county facilities fall within city or UGA/MUGA boundaries.
- The county may have opportunities to provide grant funding to city jurisdictions for provision of parks, in particular Neighborhood Parks.

Partnership opportunities for acquisition and development of needed facilities may also be appropriate. Snohomish County has previously partnered with the City of Everett and Port of Everett to acquire the 10th Street Boat launch in Everett and has also partnered with the City of Mill Creek to acquire the Tambark Creek Park site. Operational partnerships that the county has secured include an agreement with the City of Arlington for operation of Twin Rivers Park and similar agreements with the Town of Darrington for Whitehorse Community Park and with the Cities of Lynnwood and Edmonds and the Edmonds School District for Meadowdale Playfields.

As Snohomish County seeks to address recreation needs, partnerships with other recreation providers will be pursued as appropriate. The potential for partnerships is significant. The five defined Recreation Areas described later in this document emphasize joint planning and coordination for the purpose of improving recreational access and the benefits that come to all communities through this coordination. As an example, creation of a plan for the Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Area will require, and benefit from, coordination with the other public land holders in the area: the Cities of Marysville and Everett, Port of Everett, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and Tulalip Tribes.

II. Park and Recreation Demand and Need

A. Park and Recreation Demand

The Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) evaluates demand for recreation based upon population projections (number, demographics and other trends), level-of-service standards, interests expressed by stakeholders/public, policy identified priorities and priorities identified by staff. Several tools are utilized to complete this evaluation including: population projections provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), county adopted population distribution allocations, applicable policy review, staff evaluation, level-of-service evaluation and stakeholder/public input obtained through meetings, surveys and solicitation of input.

Current stakeholder/public recreation interests are summarized in the Snohomish County Park and Recreation Visioning Plan (PRVP), which addresses the Washington State Administrative Code (WAC) recommendation that development of park and recreation elements utilize a visioning process to engage the public in development of the element. The PRVP is updated at least every six years and provides the opportunity to identify current stakeholder/public interests, refine priorities and identify budgeting to address those priorities.

County Population Projections

Snohomish County has, in recent years, experienced significant population growth. This new population creates the need for additional parks of all types and attention to park elements which meet emerging needs (e.g. accessible facilities for aging populations). The basis for population planning utilized in this Snohomish County Park and Recreation Element (Park Element) is provided by the OFM for 2035 and agreed upon allocations of this population between cities/towns and Snohomish County. Total population projected for 2035 is expected to increase by 238,281 individuals from 2011 population. Planned distribution of this population between jurisdictions is provided within the Snohomish County Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).

The current estimated population for unincorporated Snohomish County, provided by OFM in 2013, is 312,500. This figure is lower than prior projections for this period and reflect a state-wide reduction in growth seen in recent years. Rates of change in population have been fluctuating however and recent growth in the economy may lead to increased rates of growth. Two major updates to this document are expected to occur prior to 2035, and future Park Elements will consider actual growth rates and updated growth projections.

Further adjustments to future Park Elements may occur as cities and/or towns incorporate Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). Over the last several years, the Cities of Marysville and Lake Stevens have both expanded their boundaries and assumed population groups that previously had been allocated to the county. Further incorporation efforts by other cities have been discussed and changes to populations served by the county may occur. Because city/town boundary expansions are uncertain, future transfer of population to cities/towns have not been assumed in this document and document updates will occur if incorporation actions significantly affect the conclusions of this Park Element.

In addition to increased population, changing population demographics are of interest in park planning so that facilities can be provided to meet the needs of county residents. Of particular interest is the trend in age demographics, which indicate that the Snohomish County population is increasing in senior proportion and the proportion of children under age 18 is decreasing. This trend has been emerging since the 1970s and projections to 2025, estimate that 24.8% of Snohomish County population will be sixty or older at that time (Snohomish County Area Agency on Aging, 2011). This figure applies to Snohomish County as a whole, including incorporated and unincorporated areas. Age demographics from 1970, 1990 and 2010 census data are shown below.

Table 2. Snohomish County Age Demographics

	Birth-17/19*	18/20*-24	25-44	45-64	65+
1970	41%*	7.4%*	26.2%	18%	7.4%
1990	27.7%	8.8%	36.6%	17.4%	9.5%

2010	24.4%	8.8%	28.6%	27.9%	10.3%
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*1970 age groupings were 0-19 and 20-24

Note that the percentage of youth reported under the age of 18 in 1970 is elevated, as census figures for that year included individuals through age 19. The next reporting group (18-24) is lower for the same year as calculations for the figure started at age 20, not 18 in 1970.

In addition to expecting an aging population, statistics also show a trend in increased obesity in Snohomish County. As reported by the Snohomish Health District, the proportion of obese adults in Snohomish County increased from 13% in 1993 to 24% in 2004 (Snohomish Health District, 2007) and increased again in 2009 to 28.8% (Snohomish Health District, 2010).

Another health trend of concern is the amount of physical activity both youth and adults engage in in any given week. At the low end of physical activity tracking, an average of 34.3% of 8th, 10th and 12th graders reported participating in moderate physical activity for 30 minutes, five days a week in 2008 (Snohomish Health District, 2011). Adults reported slightly higher adherence to this standard at 39.4% (Snohomish Health District, 2007). The new physical activity guideline used for children currently is one hour of activity, which causes increased heart rate, every day. Within Snohomish County, an average of 22.9% of surveyed 6th, 8th, 10th or 12th graders met this standard (Snohomish Health District, 2011). While this number is up from previous sampling in 2008, it means that less than 1 in 4 youth are meeting this standard for healthy activity levels.

Parks Level-of-Service

(Two level-of-service (LOS) methodologies are being considered for inclusion within the final Park Element. These two methodologies are a 'no change' option, which is based on provision of Community Parks, and a new LOS approach, which considers provision of specific types of recreational facilities within Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks, as well as Regional Trails. A single methodology will be selected following review and be included in the final Park Element).

Option 1 - Community Park Based Level-of-Service

Parks currently operates under a Community Parks based level-of-service (LOS), which provides minimum and target standards for new parks (land) and developed facilities. This LOS is described as:

Table 3. Snohomish County Parks Level-of-Service

Park Category	Target LOS	Minimum LOS
Community Parks – Land	1 park per 15,000 additional residents (relative to 2000 population)	1 park per 21,000 additional residents (relative to 2000 population)
Community Parks – Facilities	1 Community Facility per 25,000 population	1 new fully developed Community Facility per 28,500 population

Additional LOS targets for other park classifications have previously been included within the CFP but were not described with ‘minimum’ LOS standards, as Community Parks were the only park classification designated as ‘necessary to support development.’ The other classifications (e.g. Regional Parks and Trails) were addressed by identification of envisioned projects, which is not a typical way of considering LOS. For this reason, identified projects for all classifications are summarized within the Recommended Park Improvements chapter of this Park Element and are not included with LOS standards.

Parks’ 2013 LOS is estimated to be:

Table 4. 2013 Level-of-Service

Parks Category	2013 LOS
Community–Land	1 park per 4,272 additional residents
Community–Facilities	1 new facility per 18,657 residents

Snohomish County is currently considering three different growth scenarios to 2035, which distribute anticipated population differently between unincorporated Snohomish County and incorporated cities and towns. For the purposes of planning parks for this anticipated growth, Growth Alternatives 2 and 3 are considered together, as both these alternatives result in the same anticipated population growth to

be accommodated within unincorporated county (distribution however is different). Growth Alternative 1 would result in a total population increase of 84,878 new residents in unincorporated Snohomish County, while Alternatives 2 and 3 would result in 110,615 additional residents in unincorporated Snohomish County, compared to the baseline population of 291,142, which is used for evaluation of LOS under Parks current methodology.

Continuing to meet Parks *minimum* LOS standards to 2035 would require:

Table 5. Additional Land and Facilities to Meet Minimum LOS

		Required Provision	
	Current Provision	Growth Target Alternative 1 (376,020)	Growth Target Alternatives 2 and 3 (401,757)
Community–Land	5	4.04	5.27
Community–Facilities	16.75	13.19	14.10

Under the evaluated Growth Alternatives, current provision of Community Parks land and facilities meet minimum standards in all areas except for land under Growth Alternative 2/3. According to the evaluation above .27 parks (land) would needed to be acquired to meet Growth Alternatives 2 and 3 by 2035.

To meet Parks *target* LOS standards would require:

Table 6. Additional Land and Facilities to Meet Target LOS

		Required Provision	
	Current Provision	Growth Target Alternative 1 (376,020)	Growth Target Alternatives 2 and 3 (401,757)
Community–Land	5	5.66	7.37
Community–Facilities	16.75	15.04	16.07

Under the evaluated Growth Alternatives, current provision of Community Park facilities meet target standards, but additional land would need to be acquired under all growth scenarios. An additional .66 parks would be needed to be acquired to meet Growth Alternative 1 by 2035 and 2.37 would be needed to be acquired to meet Growth Alternatives 2 and 3.

It should be noted in reviewing these calculations that transfers of park properties to other jurisdictions and/or park reclassifications affect these calculations. In recent years, Snohomish County transferred the King Property, Allen Creek, Lundeen and Mother Nature's Window Parks, which reduced provision of facilities which contribute to Parks LOS. Similarly, incorporation of unincorporated areas by cities and towns affects LOS calculations by reducing the population that is considered in the LOS calculation.

Identifying the preferred location for acquisition of the new Community Park(s) identified above is based upon an analysis of geographic distribution of anticipated growth and identification of underserved areas. Parks LOS identifies that a new park property should be acquired to serve the needs of every 15,000 to 21,000 additional residents. A mapping analysis is utilized to identify areas of anticipated growth and high density areas that are outside the service area of current Community Parks (Community Parks are generally considered to serve residents within a 5 mile radius). Maps generated to identify target areas for new Community Parks are located in Appendix C.

Based on the mapping analysis used to identify new Community Park locations, the following areas were identified as currently underserved: Stanwood, northwest Granite Falls, east and west of Marysville and the Sky Valley area east of Monroe. Anticipated population growth for these areas however does not meet the 15,000 growth threshold. A secondary analysis of areas located within the 3 – 5 mile service radius identified another area northwest of Arlington which is similarly below this population growth standard. One single area located within the 1 – 3 mile distance from current Community Parks is located between the Cities of Lynwood and Mukilteo and is the only contiguous area which exceeds the 15,000 growth target under Growth Alternatives 2 and 3, and which approaches this same target under Growth Alternative 1. For this reason, land acquisition within this area will be the first priority and identification of additional acquisition locations will be considered during the next Comprehensive Plan update (anticipated to occur in 2023), if Growth Targets 2 or 3 are selected. This approach to identifying additional acquisition areas will be taken so that Parks can be responsive to potential annexations, park reclassifications and actual population growth.

Parks has a history of being responsive to community interests and LOS standards should not be considered to limit future park provision. LOS standards are used as a guideline and minimum threshold for facility provision only and providing facilities beyond these standards may occur in order to meet community interests and identified needs.

Parks reviews and updates actual LOS provision annually in the Statement of Assessment, which is considered as part of the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Calculating and considering LOS trends helps Parks identify status of park provision and make adjustments, as needed.

Option 2 – Capacity Level-of-Service Methodology

This Park Element provides a new level-of-service (LOS) methodology that addresses provision of recreation facilities, regardless of the classification of park at which they are provided. This method is based upon the quantity of these facilities per measure of population and are grouped into ‘active’ and ‘passive’ facilities, miles of Regional Trail, miles of waterfront, number of campsites and number of parking spaces. Because this approach considers provision of facilities to serve population (i.e. the more facilities provided, the more population served) this approach is termed ‘capacity.’ This approach to LOS is widely used by recreation providers and is the basis of standards provided by the National Recreation and Park Association. Parks current LOS, as provided across the whole system, by this method is indicated in the table below.

Table 7. 2013 Capacity Based Level-of-Service

Summary Capacity Measures	Unit Measure	Population Per Unit: 2013
Active Recreation Facilities	Number	3,064
Passive Recreation Facilities	Number	3,307
Regional Trail	Open Miles	8,562
Waterfront	Mile	6,708
Campsites	Number	992
Parking Spaces	Number	107

Under this methodology, ‘active’ facilities are considered to be: ballfields, sport courts, playgrounds, skate parks, boat launches, mountain biking skills courses, equestrian facilities, racetracks and swimming pools. ‘Passive’ facilities are considered to be: shelters, off-leash dog areas, miles of walking trails (in a park), community gardens and amphitheaters. Grouping recreation facilities together in this way (i.e. ‘active’ and ‘passive’) provides flexibility in how meeting LOS standards is accomplished. For example, when providing additional ‘active’ facilities to serve population growth, the community that will be served by the facility can identify if additional playgrounds or ballfields is more important to their recreational needs.

In order to continue to meet the current LOS for future anticipated population, it is estimated that the following additional facilities will need to be provided:

Table 8. Future Facilities Needed by 2035 - Capacity LOS

			Needed Units to Meet Demand: 2035	
Summary Capacity Measures	Unit Measure	Population Per Unit: 2013	Growth Alternative 1	Growth Alternatives 2 and 3
Net Unincorporated Growth 2013 - 2035			63,520	89,257
Active Recreation Facilities	Number	3,064	21	29
Passive Recreation Facilities	Number	3,307	19	27
Regional Trail	Open Miles	8,562	7	10
Waterfront	Mile	6,708	10	13
Campsites	Number	992	64	90
Parking Spaces	Number	107	596	838

The above numbers reflect what would be required to continue Parks’ current LOS, as calculated across all facilities provided by Parks, and also reflect a past history of park provision that may be difficult to sustain into the future. These numbers may be adopted as a ‘target’ LOS, but a minimum LOS will be

utilized to reflect expectations of what can actually be provided. Waterfront miles, for example, reflect past significant acquisition efforts that occurred in the 1990's within the Snohomish River Estuary. Acquisition of an additional 9.5 to 13.3 miles of waterfront may be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve by 2035. In addition, designation of Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks and Regional Trails as park classifications 'necessary to support development' will prioritize future facility provision to maintain standards within those parks. Parks current LOS, as provided only within Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Regional Parks and Regional Trails is identified in the table below.

Table 9. 2013 Capacity Based Level-of-Service for Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks and Regional Trails

Summary Capacity Measures	Unit Measure	Population Per Unit: 2013
Active Recreation Facilities	Number	3,094
Passive Recreation Facilities	Number	3,457
Regional Trail	Open Miles	8,562
Waterfront	Mile	10,682
Campsites	Number	992
Parking Spaces	Number	114

In order to continue to meet this narrowed LOS for future anticipated population, it is estimated that the following additional facilities will need to be provided:

Table 10. Future Facilities Needed by 2035 Based on Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks and Regional Trails

			Needed Units to Meet Demand: 2035	
Summary Capacity Measures	Unit Measure	Population Per Unit: 2013	Growth Alternative 1	Growth Alternatives 2 and 3
Net Unincorporated Growth 2013 - 2035			63,520	89,257

Active Recreation Facilities	Number	3,094	21	29
Passive Recreation Facilities	Number	3,457	18	26
Regional Trail	Open Miles	8,562	7	10
Waterfront	Mile	10,682	6	8
Campsites	Number	992	64	90
Parking Spaces	Number	114	557	782

Locating new facilities which are provided to meet adopted LOS standards can and should occur within currently owned park facilities as much as possible. Public interest in utilization of existing facilities is strong and many parks have the capacity for additional facilities to serve population. Esperance Park, for example, which is located within the southwest county UGA, could support increased use through provision of off-street parking and inclusion of additional facilities such as a shelter. Identification of LOS-based improvement projects will be identified by Parks staff and stakeholders and included in the annual CIP for review and approval through the CIP process.

Acquiring new facilities to support LOS standards is expected to be needed and property acquisition will be based on a number of factors outlined in the acquisition section of this document as well as a needs analysis which considers recreation facilities provided by Parks as well as cities and towns. There is strong interest in locating facilities in proximity to population and minimizing the distance from communities to parks. A mapping review of distance from currently available (developed) Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks and Regional Trails is included in Appendix C and also considers facilities provided by cities and towns. This analysis has identified a number of UGA areas that are greater from 1 mile from a county or city/town facility. Specific areas identified are:

- North Stanwood (Note: A portion of this area is proposed for UGA removal)
- South Lake Stevens
- North of the City of Snohomish
- East Everett
- North Mill Creek
- South Mukilteo/North Lynnwood

- North Monroe
- North Sultan (Note: A portion of this area is proposed for UGA removal)
- Northeast Bothell
- Northwest Bothell
- Maltby UGA (Note: Planned development of Wellington Hills Park will serve a portion of this area)
- Gold Bar

The majority of these areas represent a relatively small geographic foot print, with the exception of the northeast Mill Creek area, which represents approximately 1,500 acres. As acquisitions are considered, locating facilities to minimize distances from those facilities to the population to be served will be considered.

Parks has previously operated under a LOS methodology that provided minimum standards for facilities classified as Community Parks, as this was the only classification identified by Snohomish County as ‘necessary to support development.’ This Park Element provides a new LOS methodology and expands park classifications designated as ‘necessary to support development’ to include Neighborhood Parks, Regional Parks and Regional Trails (in addition to Community Parks). Although all park classifications provided by Parks serve new population, these classifications have been specifically identified as the facilities that are most directly connected to new population. Neighborhood Parks are, by definition, urban facilities and are located in proximity to areas that are targeted for growth. Community Parks function in much the same way, although some parks classified as ‘Community’ may be located in rural areas and not in the immediate proximity of growth. When Community Parks are located in rural areas, they include some type of feature that users typically travel for (e.g. Lake Goodwin Community Park with lake access), and in this way serve new population. Regional Parks and Trails contain features that draw users from across the county and are highly valued by Snohomish County residents. Parks’ two remaining classifications, Open Space/Preserve and Special Use Facilities also provide service to new residents, but because of the specialized nature of Special Use Facilities and limited recreational access to Open Space/Preserve properties, designation of these two classifications as ‘necessary to support development’ is not included at this time.

Linking population growth to the demand for new facilities is not a new concept and the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has provided guidelines for individual facilities which is based on population being served (e.g. one volleyball court per 5,000 residents) (National Recreation and Park Association, 1983). This approach has a long history for use in identifying the need for recreation facilities and the Playground Association of America (formed in 1906) established some of the first population based guidelines in response to increased population and urbanization. This identification of the need for additional recreation facilities based on number of population/users is nicely summarized by the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition which states:

“Outdoor recreation is the way that we experience nature. When we hike, hunt, swim and fish we connect with nature in ways unavailable to us day to day. As our state’s population has increased, so has demand for ball parks, trails, water-access sites and other recreation resources (Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition).”

Stakeholder/Public Interests

Long term trends in recreation and stakeholder/public interests can be determined by evaluating patterns in local public interest surveys and by reviewing public interest surveys conducted by other jurisdictions. The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) periodically publishes a statewide outdoor recreation survey. The latest survey was released in 2006 and includes rates of participation in various outdoor activities (Clearwater Research, Inc., 2006). The 2006 RCO findings are as follows:

Table 11. 2006 RCO Recreation Findings

Ranking of Major Activity Areas by Average Month Participation	
Walking/Hiking	73.8%
Team/Individual Sports, Physical Activity	69.2%
Nature Activity	53.9%
Picnicking	46.8%

Indoor Community Facility Activity	45.1%
Water Activity	36.0%
Sightseeing	35.4%
Bicycle Riding	30.9%
Off-road Vehicle Riding	17.9%
Snow/Ice Activity	17.5%
Camping	17.1%
Fishing	15.2%
Hunting/Shooting	7.3%
Equestrian Activity	4.3%
Air Activity	4.0%

In addition to this information, the RCO report also noted that:

“The most frequently mentioned activities that Washingtonians wanted to do more of in the 12 months following the survey interview included sightseeing (46.9%), picnicking or cooking outdoors (39.4%), hiking (33.5%), tent camping with a car or motorcycle (33.4%), and swimming or wading at a beach (28.4%).”

These findings were collected state-wide and include respondents from both city and unincorporated jurisdictions.

Parks has issued public interest surveys in support of planning efforts for several decades and has used a similar format for the last 10 years. These surveys have asked for input into the recreation activities that the public wants Parks to focus their efforts and asked for prioritization of the following categories:

- **Water access**, such as motor boating, kayaking, beach access, fishing and swimming pools
- **Trails**, such as hiking, walking and horseback riding

- **Sports facilities**, such as baseball and soccer fields
- **Conservation and wildlife areas**, such as viewing locations, interpretive trails and protected areas
- **Leisure**, such as picnic areas, camping and viewpoints
- **Special use facilities**, such as golf courses, fairgrounds and civic centers

The responses are as follows:

Table 12. Park Public Interest Survey Results

Recreation Category	2011 Average Ranking (lower number indicates higher preference for category)		2007 Recreation Interests (higher % indicates higher preference for category)		2001 Recreation Interests (higher % indicates higher preference for category)		Total Average Rank (lower number indicates highest rank)
	Response	Rank	Response	Rank	Response	Rank	
Trails	2.26	1	27.2%	1	24.7%	1	1
Conservation and wildlife areas	3.15	4	23.7%	2	21.6%	2	2.7
Leisure	2.87	2	18.5%	3	14.8%	5	3.3
Water access	2.99	3	14.6%	4	17.7%	3	3.3
Sports facilities	4.25	5	10.7%	5	16.1%	4	4.7
Special use facilities	4.69	6	5.3%	6	5.1%	6	6

Local survey results and RCO survey results are not directly comparable as the RCO asked for information on recreation activities that respondents spent their time participating in while Parks' survey asked for input into recreation categories that the public wanted the Department to focus its resources.

The following general observations may be made from this information however:

- Trail interest and use are high and represent both the highest participation rate as well as interest in future provision of trail facilities.
- Interest in leisure facilities has been rising over the last 10 years and RCO identified specifically that the public had interest in spending more time pursuing leisure-type activities (as categorized by Parks).
- Interest in conservation facilities has decreased, although participation in ‘nature activity’ ranked relatively high in the RCO study (53.9%). It is possible that previous high prioritization of this category in Park surveys reflected Endangered Species Act listings and associated awareness, although the cause of this change is not known.
- Interest in water access remains steady and relatively high (top 4). The RCO findings indicate that 36.0% of respondents participate in water activities, although other categories used by the RCO, such as nature activity, may also fall under this category, as defined by Parks.
- Interest in sports facilities has ranked consistently low in Parks’ surveys, although RCO found ‘team/individual sports, physical activity’ received the second highest rate of participation.
- Interest in special use facilities ranks consistently low, which is reflective of the smaller proportion of residents that typically use these facilities as well as the specialty nature of these features.

In addition to prioritization of recreation facilities, Parks’ 2011 survey asked respondents to answer a number of questions addressing such things as satisfaction with the condition of park facilities, satisfaction with the availability of facilities, more detailed prioritization of facilities within the categories defined above, feedback on methods of funding for parks and any open ended comments that they wished to share. The full results of this survey and findings from stakeholder/public meetings as well as comments submitted to Parks are located in the PRVP. Major findings from this process are:

- There are a wide variety of recreational interests represented in the county.
- Trails are extremely popular and continuing to provide trail opportunities should be a priority. There is significant interest in opening the Whitehorse Trail.
- The Centennial Trail in particular is extremely popular and suggestions for improvement

should be reviewed for feasibility.

- Focus on leisure facilities should be a priority, in particular picnic areas, camping, playgrounds and off-leash areas.
- Water access continues to be a priority and opportunities for expanded access should be pursued. Saltwater access in particular is limited in the county and opportunities for acquisition should be explored.
- The comment was made repeatedly that the county should focus on maintaining existing facilities rather than developing new sites.
- Equestrian facilities are very popular in Snohomish County and there is significant interest in maintaining/expanding opportunities.
- Response to questions about funding parks drew polar opposite feedback. Special funding for parks is a sensitive issue and needs to be considered carefully before making changes to the current structure.
- Many citizens do not have a clear understanding of who Snohomish County Parks is, which parks are owned and managed by the county, and what programs the county provides. Parks could do a better job of identifying facilities that are offered through the county.
- There was significant interest in the Evergreen State Fairgrounds and improvements to it.
- There was significant interest in development of the shooting range outside of Sultan.

Policy Based Demand

The policy basis for provision of county park facilities is founded on the Multicounty Planning Policies (MPP), which informs and guides the Countywide Planning Policies (CPP), which in turn informs and guides the Snohomish County General Planning Policies (GPP). As a policy document, the GPP provides guidance for many operational aspects of providing parks, but also identifies priorities for acquisition and development of some park facilities. An example of an operational policy is Policy PR 1.A.2¹, which guides the approach to be taken when developing parks in UGAs. Implementation of this policy does not specifically result in acquisition or development of a park facility and therefore is not included in the discussion below as a specific demand to be addressed.

¹ PR 1.A.2 - Include municipal jurisdictions in the planning process for park facilities that are located within areas expected to be annexed by that jurisdiction

Implementation of some policies, such as Policy PR 7.A.1², requires that a process be undertaken which may lead to an acquisition and/or development action(s). Since a process to implement these policies has not yet been completed, and is expected to be completed on a case-by-case basis, specific needs associated with implementing these types of policies are not included in this document. Inclusion of demand associated with these process-based policies are identified below however as ‘procedural’ demands and included as a placeholder for facility needs that may come out of policy implementation during the lifespan of this document. Lastly, the GPP includes some policies, such as Policy PR 4.A.5³, which clearly carry facility implications and are included below for consideration of needs associated with meeting the demand.

Park and recreation demands derived from county policy:

Procedural

PR 1.A.1 The County shall work with cities and towns to create an integrated system of passive and active parks and open spaces and trails, which are accessible to all county residents (county, city and town residents) and provide for a variety of recreational activities.

PR 1.B.1 Coordinate with Skagit and King County cities as well as Skagit and King Counties in the planning and construction of regional trail systems, as they cross jurisdictional boundaries.

PR 1.B.2 The County shall work with state and federal entities to promote integration between facilities and ensure continued recreational access to public facilities, as appropriate.

PR 2.A.1 Explore and develop programs, when possible, to assist cities in their efforts to acquire Neighborhood Park sites within their UGAs.

PR 2.A.4 Prioritize development of regional multiuse linear parks (Trails).

PR 3.B.1 Additional recreation facilities should be provided as needed to meet level-of-service standards, priorities identified in the Parks and Recreation Element, priorities identified in other County plans, and/or emerging needs identified by the Department.

² PR 7.A.1 - Work with communities, historical organizations and the Snohomish County Cultural Resources Office and local Tribes to identify culturally and historically significant properties appropriate for inclusion in the Snohomish County park system

³ PR 4.A.5 - Acquire land and develop additional parks with water access, with a priority on providing saltwater access

- PR 3.B.2 Parks should develop new parks and park facilities when opportune and appropriate even if minimum planning goals are achieved.
- PR 4.A.4 Evaluate, pursue and develop, as appropriate, unique, unanticipated acquisition opportunities that are presented to the Department.
- PR 5.A.1 Seek appropriate opportunities for natural resource enhancement within Parks inventory.
- PR 5.A.2 Explore techniques to manage and protect forest lands in Parks inventory.
- PR 5.A.3 Partner with public and private organizations to assist in habitat improvement implementation, monitoring and research on County park lands, as appropriate.
- PR 6.A.1 Parks should provide individual recreational programs as appropriate.
- PR 6.A.2 Parks should support recreation programs provided by external agencies, jurisdictions or private vendors, through provision of facilities when appropriate.
- PR 7.A.1 Work with communities, historical organizations and the Snohomish County Cultural Resources Office and local Tribes to identify culturally and historically significant properties appropriate for inclusion in the Snohomish County park system.
- PR 7.A.2 Provide interpretive opportunities at current County parks when appropriate and feasible.
- PR 8.A.2 Provide operational efficiencies by replacing aging infrastructure with updated energy/water efficient components, by implementing naturalization and/or sustainable operation initiatives as part of park maintenance activities when feasible.
- PR 8.B.1 The Parks Department will coordinate with other recreational providers within the Recreation Areas and promote opportunities for collaboration.

Facility

- PR 2.A.2 Acquire and develop park facilities, and/or expand capacities of existing park facilities, as needed to maintain level-of-service standards.
- PR 2.A.3 Renovate aging facilities in order to maintain and improve existing use, as appropriate.

Priority for renovation will be given to the following facilities:

- Parks which currently require significant maintenance due to facility age,
- Parks that need energy/water efficiency upgrades
- Facilities that are heavily used and/or are significant revenue generators
- Parks in close proximity to water bodies and which do not meet current stormwater standards

PR 4.A.5 Acquire land and develop additional parks with water access, with a priority on providing saltwater access.

Staff Identified Priorities

In addition to the demands identified through the methods described above, Parks staff has identified additional priorities for park facility provision. Some of the following are uncompleted projects carried forward from the 2007 Snohomish County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan, and some are projects that have been expressed to staff by stakeholders outside of the PRVP development process so were not captured in that document.

Additional park facility demands identified by Parks staff are:

RECREATION AREAS

Due to the continued urbanization of Snohomish County and the economic benefits that parks bring to communities, an idea has emerged to develop 'Recreation Areas' that concentrate recreation amenities for user benefit, operational efficiencies and economic development. The GPP notes that "Snohomish County shall support ventures in resource tourism and outdoor recreation that are financially viable and environmentally responsible" (ED 6.B.2). The identification and promotion of Recreation Areas support this policy. Five Recreation Areas are envisioned at this time: the Sky Valley Recreation Corridor (defined by Hwy 2 and stretching from the City of Snohomish to the county border), the Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Area (estuary area between the Cities of Everett and Marysville), the Seven Lakes Recreation Area (west of I-5 between the Stillaguamish River to the north and the Tulalip

Reservation to the south), the Whitehorse Recreation Corridor (defined by the Whitehorse Trail stretching from the City of Arlington to the Town of Darrington) and the Southwest County Recreation Area (that area contained within the southwest county UGA).

These five areas have been identified as already containing significant recreational resources and as having opportunities for enhanced user experiences. For example, within the Seven Lakes Recreation Area, Parks already has the following developed facilities: Gissberg Twin Lakes Park (fishing, swimming and casual trail use), Wenberg Park (camping, boat launch, swimming and other day use), Lake Goodwin Park (swimming and day use) and Kayak Point Park and Golf Course (golf course, camping, boat launch, saltwater access, day use). In addition to these facilities, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) operates six boat launches in the area and Parks has three large, undeveloped landholdings, which includes undeveloped land at Kayak Point. Development and promotion of this recreation area would benefit users by clustering recreational activities so that when camping, for example, visitors would have the opportunity to enjoy a lake experience, saltwater experience and, following further development, possible hiking and/or mountain biking opportunities. This type of development also provides benefits to Parks by clustering staff and maintenance resources into a smaller area, thereby limiting travel time and staff duplications. The Seven Lakes Recreation Area has the added benefit of being located adjacent to I-5, so that access is convenient for the park visitor.

The Sky Valley Recreation Corridor is currently envisioned to stretch east along Hwy 2 from the City of Snohomish to the county line. Within this area, Parks operates the Evergreen State Fairgrounds and plans to develop three new facilities, currently referred to as Steelhead County Park, Reiter Foothills and the Sky Valley Sportman's Park. Significant holdings are operated by other providers within this area and include State Parks (Wallace Falls), Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and United States Forest Service properties. This area has enormous potential to draw visitors from the Seattle area as it is within easy access by car and offers significant opportunities for hiking, off-road vehicles and others. Significant portions of this area have also been identified on the Snohomish County Growth Management Act (GMA) Comprehensive Plan Open Space Corridors and Green Belt Areas map as agricultural, forest or wilderness areas, and therefore have important open space value. Incorporating recreation into this area fits into the goals of open space designated areas and capitalizes

on the scenic benefits present in this area. The Evergreen State Fairgrounds would be a key component of this Recreation Area. The site is located on Hwy 2, providing a convenient jumping off place for the Skykomish Valley. The property includes 96 recreational vehicle camping sites in addition to all the other amenities to the site.

The Snohomish River Estuary is located between the Cities of Everett and Marysville. Totalling approximately 19.5 square miles, approximately 4,000 acres of this area is in public ownership (roughly 32%). Snohomish County owns approximately 1,800 acres (including land under the custody of the Surface Water Management division of Public Works). WDFW owns approximately 1,400 acres and other public land holders in the estuary include the Port of Everett, the City of Everett and the City of Marysville. The Tulalip Tribes are an additional large land holder in the estuary. The estuary is a rich recreational area which provides opportunities for hiking, kayaking, bird watching and hunting. The proximity of this large area to significant population centers offers enormous potential for public use, enjoyment and appreciation. Full development of this recreational area will require coordination with the various land owners and development of a recreation plan.

The Whitehorse Recreation Corridor is defined by the Whitehorse Trail, which stretches from the City of Arlington to the Town of Darrington and links to the Centennial Trail at its western terminus. Currently, approximately seven miles of this trail are open adjacent to the Town of Darrington. Development of the remainder of this corridor is a priority and it is envisioned that the trail will provide mixed use access and may include camping opportunities at some of the trailheads. This area is defined by the trail and the north fork of the Stillaguamish River; the two cross multiple times along the alignment. In addition, the Whitehorse Recreation Corridor also includes significant equestrian opportunities and is sure to be popular with the horse community.

The Southwest County Recreation Area is defined as that area designated as the 'Southwest County Urban Growth Area' in the CPP. This area includes the Cities of Everett, Mukilteo, Mill Creek, Lynnwood, Edmonds, Mountlake Terrace, Brier and the Town of Woodway, as well as areas of unincorporated UGA. Within this area, the county currently owns thirty-four park properties, which range from the portion of the Interurban Trail operated by Snohomish County, to Meadowdale Regional Park, to open space tracts

within the boundaries of the City of Bothell. In addition to these county holdings, significant recreation opportunities are provided by cities and school districts. Planning for the Southwest County Recreation Area will require coordination with all recreation providers in the area and has the potential to create an integrated system of parks which offers recreation opportunities greater than that provided by any one single provider.

Promotion and development within these five Recreation Areas has the potential to provide enormous benefits to Snohomish County residents through recreational activity enhancement as well as economic benefits from tourism. Development of Recreation Area plans would identify priorities for enhancement as well as opportunities for collaboration within these areas.

AQUATIC FACILITY

Public interest in an aquatic facility has been an on-going topic of discussion and Parks has been aware of the need for a regional facility, primarily through conversation with other providers. Within Snohomish County, four year-round community recreational public pools are provided by: the Snohomish School District and the Cities of Everett, Lynnwood and Mountlake Terrace. Two summer facilities are provided by the City of Edmonds and Parks (McCollum Pool). Two semi-public pools are available through high schools in Lake Stevens and Marysville. Programming however at these facilities is limited and does not provide full community access.

In 1990 the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) published a recommendation for the number of public pools needed in United States communities, based on population: one pool for every 20,000 citizens (National Recreation and Park Association, 1983). Although this never became a national standard (due to variables such as other providers, area income levels, different types of pools, and desired programming by various age groups), data was collected documenting the number of public pools from various cities across the United States and in Washington State. From these cities it was found that on average, the United States has approximately one public pool for every 45,570 people.

There are several different classes of pools, which should be considered when evaluating level-of-service

for pool facilities. The pool classes are generally:

Leisure/recreation – Includes the widest array of facility options that include zero-depth entry, water slides, eating areas, decks, and play apparatus. These facilities are often combined with amenities like concessions and group activity areas.

Instructional & fitness – Includes learn-to-swim and lifesaving programs, fitness classes and lap swimming. Requires deeper (four to five feet) water and generous deck space for instruction.

Therapy and rehabilitation – Often offered by medical organizations and requires warm shallow water.

Competitive swimming – Requires specific lengths of 25 to 50 meters, depth of five to seven feet, eight to ten lanes (each eight to ten feet wide), and spectator seating.

Competitive diving – Requires one and three-meter diving boards, with optional platform diving for national and international events. May require separate, deep water, 13-foot minimum tank.

Team competitions – Includes competitive water polo and synchronized swimming. Requires a minimum pool depth of seven feet and large pool area. Can use competition pool if deep enough.

Special events/rentals – Separate areas of facilities used in conjunction with the aquatic facilities for birthday parties, corporate events and community gatherings.

Social/Relaxation – Can be picnic areas or landscaped areas, but are generally non-aquatic spaces that serve to integrate social and aquatic activities. Most often associated with leisure/recreation function above.

Population estimates for Snohomish County in 2013 place total population (unincorporated and incorporated together) at approximately 745,913. Given the number of public semi-leisure/recreation pools available, this equates to a service level of one pool per 93,239 individuals. There are additional pools available within the county, primarily provided by clubs or the YMCA, but because of their smaller size and requirement for membership, these “instructional & fitness” type facilities do not address the recommended level-of-service.

In addition to the deficiency in leisure/recreation type public pools identified by NRPA's recommendation, there is an even greater need for a competitive swimming, diving and team competition facility. Currently the only facility which completely meets this need is available in King County. North of King County and south of the Canadian border, no competition level (eight to ten lane, 50-meter) pools are available.

Competitive swimming is a popular recreational activity in our area and five clubs are active in Snohomish County. A competitive aquatics facility would serve these swimmers, allow for expansion of the sport and bring revenue to the area during competitive events. Providing a facility such as this would fit Parks' role as a regional facility provider.

A preliminary study has been conducted to analyze the need and market for a regional aquatic center. The analysis of the Snohomish County market indicated the following-

- The primary (Snohomish County) and secondary (Skagit and Whatcom Counties) service area for a regional, fully competitive aquatic facility has a population of nearly 1,055,000.
- While there are six indoor and two outdoor public pools within the Snohomish County service area, many of these facilities are older and reaching the end of their lifespan (estimated to be up to three of the total).
- It is anticipated that during the course of the next five years, there will be a net loss of at least two aquatic facilities.
- Most school districts do not have their own pools and must use other indoor and outdoor pools in the area

- The only true indoor competitive pool able to host regional events is the King County Aquatic Center and it is not located within the service area of Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom Counties.
- All but one of the existing pools are conventional facilities with no leisure amenities - the recreational swimming market is only served by one facility at the time of the study [Note that the Lynnwood Recreation Center has completed its aquatic facility upgrades since this study and now includes leisure amenities].
- Interviews with Snohomish County aquatic teams indicate that they have to limit team size and practice due to the lack of facilities - many teams have to use multiple facilities to serve their needs.
- With the lack of pool times, many aquatic teams are unable to provide services to meet demand.

With an understanding of the current aquatic facilities, their program and capacity limitations, and realizing that the situation will only get worse in the coming years, a regional, fully competitive, multi-aquatic sport venue is crucial to support the area's swimming needs.

REGIONAL ATHLETIC FACILITY

During development of the 2007 Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan (Comprehensive Plan), the message was heard repeatedly that Snohomish County sports league providers desired a regional athletic complex. Currently it is very common for softball, baseball, football, lacrosse and soccer leagues to travel outside of the county to participate in tournament events. Leagues travel to the City of Burlington facility (Skagit County), or may go even farther to participate in large scale competition.

Providing a local, regional athletic complex offers opportunities to the county. As an initial opportunity, establishing a regional athletic complex in Snohomish County helps support a recreation program that serves a significant number of county residents. From an economic standpoint, a facility of this type has the potential to bring significant revenue to the local economy. Participants traveling large distances require food and lodging and may participate in other activities during their visit to the area. Revenue for the facility itself may also be generated and can help offset operating costs through rental fees charged to use the site.

To provide an effective regional athletic complex, the site needs to be of sufficient size to allow for a minimum of 12 games to be held at the same time and be designed for extended play. To meet these needs, the identified site should allow room for fields, parking and support facilities (restrooms and concessions) and, if feasible, include artificial turf and lighting. Finding an appropriate location and funding this type of facility requires significant resources and may best be approached from a partnership position.

SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Snohomish County adopted a Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP) in 2013, which “...provides a strategic and systematic approach to integrating environmentally sustainable practices into County government operations” (Snohomish County Office of Energy & Sustainability, 2013). The SOAP is targeted at refining county day-to-day operations in order to reduce environmental impacts and includes a number of goals and objectives for implementation through 2017. Many of the goals and objectives included relate to county procedures, but a number of capital projects may be derived as a means of meeting the goals and objectives contained in the document.

Parks is committed to continued improvements in the sustainability of department actions and is in the unique position to integrate sustainability into services that the public enjoys. Significant strides have been made in recent years to reduce waste, improve efficiencies, increase recycling, address social equity and integrate sustainability into day-to-day actions. The Parks Department works to consider fiscal, environmental and social implications of department actions and many projects included in this

Recreation Element are specifically included as a means of promoting sustainability. The SOAP addresses a portion of the efforts that Parks is pursuing and including capital projects to assist in implementing the SOAP should be considered.

Summary of Identified Park Facility Demand

The following is a summary of demands identified through the process described above. Where demands derived from different sources are similar, they are grouped together into a single item. Demands are separated into procedural demands, which may result in capital projects when implemented, and demands directly related to a facility need.

Table 13. Summary of Identified Demands

ID	Basis of Demand	Demand Description
Procedural Demands		
PRO.1.	<i>Policy (PR 1.A.1, PR 1.B.1, PR 1.B.2)</i>	Provide an integrated system of passive and active parks and open spaces and trails
PRO.2.	<i>Policy (PR 2.A.1)</i>	Assist cities and towns in efforts to acquire Neighborhood Parks
PRO.3.	<i>Policy (PR 3.B.1, 3.B.2, PR 4.A.4)</i>	Acquire and/or develop new parks and park facilities as appropriate, including unique unanticipated acquisition opportunities
PRO.4.	<i>Policy (PR 5.A.1, PR 5.A.2, PR 5.A.3)</i>	Manage, protect and enhance natural resources (including forest lands) within Parks inventory, utilizing partnership opportunities
PRO.5.	<i>Policy (6.A.1, 6.A.2)</i>	Provide and/or support recreation programs
PRO.6.	<i>Policy (PR 7.A.1, PR 7.A.2)</i>	Identify culturally and historically significant properties appropriate for inclusion in Parks inventory and provide interpretive opportunities at current parks
PRO.7.	<i>Policy (PR 8.A.2)</i>	Incorporate operational efficiencies within existing parks as part of maintenance activities and through consideration of additional efficiencies such as implementation of a naturalization program and/or sustainable operations initiative

PRO.8.	<i>Policy (PR 8.B.1), Staff</i>	Develop Recreation Area plans for the five identified Recreation Areas and improve recreation opportunities within those areas based on individual plan recommendations, as appropriate
Facility Demands		
FAC.1. Option 1	<i>Level-of-Service Standards; Population Projections, Policy (PR 2.A.2, 3.B.1)</i>	Acquire one new Community Park property in the Lynwood/Mukilteo area
FAC.1. Option 2	<i>Level-of-Service Standards; Population Projections, Policy (PR 2.A.2, 3.B.1)</i>	Develop facilities to meet LOS standards for provision of: active and passive facilities, miles of developed Regional Trails, waterfront miles and campsites and parking spaces to support use of those facilities. Acquire land as needed to meet LOS standards.
FAC.2.	<i>Population Projections</i>	Provide facilities to meet projected county age demographics, with particular focus on facilities to serve aging populations
FAC.3.	<i>Population Demographics</i>	Provide facilities which encourage active recreation and participation in recreation activities
FAC.4.	<i>Stakeholder/Public Interests; Policy (PR 2.A.3)</i>	Renovate and/or maintain existing facilities
FAC.5.	<i>Stakeholder/Public Interests; Policy (PR 4.A.5)</i>	Provide additional water access, in particular saltwater access
FAC.6.	<i>Stakeholder/Public Interests; Policy (PR 2.A.4)</i>	Provide additional trail facilities
FAC.7.	<i>Stakeholder/Public Interests</i>	Provide additional equestrian opportunities
FAC.8.	<i>Stakeholder/Public Interests</i>	Provide additional leisure facilities, with specific emphasis on picnic areas, camping, playgrounds and off-leash areas
FAC.9.	<i>Staff</i>	Provide an aquatic facility
FAC.10.	<i>Staff</i>	Provide a regional athletic facility

FAC.11.	<i>Stakeholder/Public Interests</i>	Develop the Sky Valley Sportsman's Park
FAC.12.	<i>Stakeholder/Public Interests</i>	Make improvements to the Evergreen State Fairgrounds
FAC.13.	<i>Staff</i>	Implement capital improvements identified in the Sustainable Operations Action Plan, which are applicable to Parks

B. Park and Recreation Need

The following is a review of demands identified in the first portion of this chapter and an evaluation of needed facilities to address those demands. The first section this analysis considers procedural demands, followed by demands related to specific facilities. Procedural demands are included in this analysis as they may lead to specific facility projects. For each demand listed below, a review of current efforts being taken to meet that demand is provided, followed by an evaluation of further efforts that could, or should, be made.

Procedural Needs

PRO.1. Provide an Integrated System of Passive and Active Parks and Open Spaces and Trails – Parks seeks to provide a system of facilities that serves the residents of Snohomish County and enhances their quality of life. This system includes a diversity of recreation opportunities, and open spaces, and considers facilities provided by other jurisdictions. Besides Parks, there are several other recreation providers working within Snohomish County. These include the United States Forest Service, Washington State DNR and Parks, as well as services provided by the 20 cities/towns located within the county boundaries. In addition to these government-based recreation providers, a number of other recreation groups provide services, including the YMCA, the Boys & Girls Club and other private providers. The services these various groups provide range in scale from access to large open tracts for camping and hiking (federal and state typically) to local recreation programs and daycare (city and private organizations typically).

When locating new facilities, Parks utilizes a philosophy of 'right park, right place.' This means that

Parks strives to locate new facilities where they are most needed, that those facilities provide the amenities that are needed for the community being served and that opportunities for synergy and interconnection are taken advantage of whenever possible. When locating new facilities, some general guidelines can be derived:

- *Neighborhood and Community Parks should be located as close to anticipated user groups as possible although travel to Community Parks is generally anticipated and a user radius of 5 miles is typical.

- *Regional Parks can be located anywhere in the county and should include features that users would consider traveling for.

- *Improvements that create connections between facilities are important (e.g. Regional Trails that connect to county and city/town facilities as well as trailheads at major bikeway intersection points).

- *Parks should be dispersed to serve different geographic areas of the county.

- *Recreational amenities should be clustered and promoted to support destination recreation and tourism opportunities as well as tournament events.

- *Siting parks to enhance use of facilities provided by another jurisdiction can be valuable on a case-by-case basis

The demand identified is to provide an integrated system of passive and active parks and open spaces and trails. Parks currently addresses this demand most specifically through implementation of LOS standards as well as the identification and planning for Recreation Areas. LOS standards seek to distribute recreational amenities throughout the county and in proximity to growing populations. Recreation Areas are identified clusters of recreational amenities that are anticipated to bring users to the area and provide a variety of opportunities to enjoy. Both of these two mechanisms are considered in different needs analysis (FAC.1. and PRO.8., respectively). Other actions taken to address this demand are pursued in a more informal way, and are integrated into consideration of individual park acquisition and development actions.

PRO.2. Assist cities and towns in efforts to acquire Neighborhood Parks – The County has a history of assisting other jurisdictions with park land acquisition and development efforts via pass through funding programs (e.g. the Neighborhood Improvement Program, Regional Recreational Task Force and interlocal agreements), Conservation Futures grant programs and transfer of facilities (e.g. Lundeen Park). Parks within neighborhood areas have been identified in the GPP as important in providing a focus to individual neighborhoods and to encourage the development of neighborhood identities. Neighborhood Parks are typically walk-to facilities and provide recreation opportunities, open space and opportunities to interact with other neighborhood residents, helping to build neighborhood identity. Neighborhood Parks are typically considered an urban amenity and the county does not have a separate LOS for these facilities. Understandably, cities and towns are anxious that the county provide Neighborhood Parks in areas they are ultimately planned to be annexed, in order to ensure that these facilities are available to their residents. However, the county has typically chosen to focus on provision of park facilities that the county is best suited to provide, such as Regional Parks and Trails, Special Use Facilities, Open Space/Preserve properties and Community Parks (although cities and towns also provide Community Parks). The county may acquire and provide new Neighborhood Park sites as opportunities arise, but generally seeks to support cities and towns in providing Neighborhood Parks. Current Neighborhood Parks provided by the county are identified in the Park Inventory Report (PIR). This inventory includes a number of Neighborhood Parks that are not currently open to the public, but are classified as Neighborhood Parks as described in Chapter I.

The demand identified is to assist cities (and towns) in efforts to acquire Neighborhood Parks. There are a number of ways in which this can be continued into the future. First, GPP Policy PR 1.A.4 states that Parks should ‘Identify parks suitable for transfer to city jurisdictions, based on location of the facility, and priorities of Parks, and negotiate with jurisdictions for transfer of specific facilities, as appropriate.’ Parks can work with individual jurisdictions to identify properties that are suitable to transfer and which help meet Neighborhood Park needs identified by the city or town. Second, where Parks has collected State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) based mitigation funding (see financing discussion for further explanation), which needs to be spent within certain geographic areas and a specific county need has not been identified, transfer of the funding to another jurisdiction through an Interlocal agreement may help support provision of additional Neighborhood Parks. Third, Parks can support city and town applications for grant funding for Neighborhood Parks through letters of support. Fourth, the county

can continue distribution of Conservation Futures funding to cities and towns, as funding becomes available, and as recommended by the Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board. Fifth, the County could initiate a new grant program, such as the Neighborhood Improvement Program or Regional Recreation Task Force, to provide and distribute funding.

As specific funding has not been identified to meet this demand, this need analysis is intended as a placeholder, recognizing the demand for additional Neighborhood Park facilities and the interest in supporting cities and towns in meeting this need. As opportunities arise to actively address this demand, Parks will work to evaluate and pursue those opportunities, as appropriate.

PRO.3. Acquire and/or develop new parks and park facilities as appropriate, including unique unanticipated acquisition opportunities – This Park Element is the primary basis for capital projects considered by Parks, including land acquisition. Upon occasion, other county plans identify land acquisition needs that fit within Parks area of expertise and that are unanticipated by this Park Element. Parks may partner with other departments to meet that need. Similarly, unanticipated acquisition and development opportunities often become available and Parks seeks to take advantage of these opportunities. In 2013, Snohomish County issued a bond to provide \$25 million dollars for Conservation Futures based acquisitions. This action was based on favorable interest rates and low property values, which provided an opportunity to provide maximum benefit with these dollars. Issuance of the bond was unanticipated prior to 2012 and Parks was able to take advantage of this opportunity and acquire several important properties through this program, including access to a 124 acre park that had previously been land-locked as well as an extension of the Centennial Trail from the City of Snohomish into King County. Similarly, unanticipated mitigation agreements may provide opportunities to provide recreational resources, such as occurred through the Brightwater mitigation agreement with King County.

Identification of specific acquisition and development projects within this Park Element should not be construed as to limit future acquisition and development efforts to only those contained within it. The demand identified is to pursue land acquisition and development projects to meet needs identified in other county plans as well as to evaluate and pursue unique unanticipated opportunities, when

appropriate. Pursuit of these opportunities will typically require review and approval through the Snohomish County Council (e.g. land acquisitions, grant applications and allocation of funding to pursue capital projects).

A specific need analysis is not provided with this demand, but this discussion is included as a placeholder to allow Parks to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities, which are considered to benefit the Parks system.

PRO.4. Manage, protect and enhance natural resources (including forest lands) within Parks inventory, utilizing partnership opportunities –Parks has a long history of supporting natural resources and currently stewards over 11,000 acres of parks and open space, much of which is undeveloped. Parks' inventory includes waterfront (Puget Sound, river, lakes and creeks), forest land, estuary and other habitat spaces. Parks staff provides oversight for these properties and Parks' Habitat Steward Lead is focused on noxious weed control, restoration projects and ensuring Parks' stormwater systems are working properly. In addition, Parks staff includes a Senior Park Naturalist who specializes in projects that support habitat improvements.

Parks has partnered with other county departments/divisions as well as non-profit groups such as the Adopt-A-Stream Foundation to complete habitat improvement and enhancement on Park properties. Some major restoration/habitat enhancement projects that have occurred in recent years include: restoration of 412 acres at Spencer Island to estuarine habitat, weed control and native tree/shrub installation at Field's Riffle, native plant installation adjacent to the north fork of the Stillaguamish along portions of the Whitehorse Trail, native tree installation at Thomas' Eddy and others.

The demand identified is to manage, protect and enhance natural resources (including forest lands) within Parks inventory, utilizing partnership opportunities. This demand is based on Goal PR 5, and associated policies:

Goal PR 5: Provide open space/natural areas and appropriate public access to these areas in order to promote the understanding and support of the natural environment and recognize the benefits that these lands provide.

Objective PR 5.A: Manage and maintain open space/natural properties in Parks inventory.

Policy PR 5.A.1: Seek appropriate opportunities for natural resource enhancement within Parks inventory.

Policy PR 5.A.2: Explore techniques to manage and protect forest lands in Parks inventory.

Policy PR 5.A.3: Partner with public and private organizations to assist in habitat improvement implementation, monitoring and research on County park lands, as appropriate.

Implicit to this goal are the ideas that 1) there is a need to provide management of natural areas provided by Parks, 2) there are opportunities for improvement of these same areas, and 3) providing public access to natural areas promotes understanding and care for these areas on the part of the public.

Management of natural areas is provided by Parks staff currently, both by habitat staff noted above and by other planning, operation and maintenance staff. Strengths of the current program include noxious weed management, maintenance of stormwater systems (and control of potentially associated pollutants) and restoration projects. An area of possible improvement would be in management of forest lands in Parks inventory. Forest stewardship plans have been completed on a number of sites, but actions to more actively manage forest stands have not occurred. Active management is understood to be complicated by public sentiment against tree removal and funding constraints. More concentrated management of forest stands in Parks inventory potentially has the benefits of improved habitat value, improved forest stand health, increased carbon sequestration and better resilience of forest stands to handle stresses. Funding for this work has the potential to be provided through selective tree harvesting, which has the additional benefit of improving forest stand health.

Proposals for restoration on Park managed lands are periodically submitted for consideration. Many times these proposals include funding for the project and are more extensive than is completed by Parks staff. Restoration projects may include structural modifications (e.g. dike removal), vegetation management (e.g. invasive removal and native plantings) and/or other actions such as beach nourishment. Parks considers these proposals on a case-by-case basis and will enter into agreements to allow the work to occur as appropriate.

Lastly, Parks seeks to provide public access to natural areas as much as possible. Parks believes that public access promotes appreciation and understanding of open spaces and provides significant benefits to the park visitors as well. Parks evaluates possibilities for public access on a case-by-case basis and will provide access when it is determined that the site can support public use, where it is safe to provide access and when public access can be supported by operational staff.

This demand is included as a placeholder for projects that may emerge over the lifespan of this document and which may address the identified demand.

PRO.5. Provide and/or support recreation programs – Direction regarding provision of recreation programs is provided in the GPP through Policies PR 6.A.1⁴, PR 6.A.2⁵ and PR 6.A.3⁶. These policies describe a limited role in providing recreation programs, but endorse providing facilities to support programs provided by others, providing programs to fill a specific need, providing programs because the county has a facility that is related to the program (e.g. McCollum pool) and/or providing programs if there is a another specific reason to do so. At this time, Parks provides swimming at McCollum pool and a specialized recreation program, which was started in 2009 to fill an identified need. Parks otherwise seeks to provide facilities that support programs provided by other entities and has partnered with the Adopt-A-Stream Foundation, YMCA and others.

⁴ Parks should provide individual recreation programs as appropriate.

⁵ Parks should support recreation programs provided by external agencies, jurisdictions or private vendors, through provision of facilities when appropriate.

⁶ Parks should provide recreation programs when it is unique to a Parks facility, fulfills an identified community need and/or supports overall objectives of the Department.

The demand identified was to provide and/or support recreation programs. At this time, no new needs have been identified for consideration, but it is expected that proposals for use of park facilities for program needs will be promoted during the life span of this document. Some proposals may include facility modifications that would require capital improvements by Parks. Some proposals may also include program provision by Parks and some proposals may include a combination of both the above. In all cases, Parks will consider proposals on a case-by-case basis and will implement county policy in determining if the program should be pursued.

PRO.6. Identify culturally and historically significant properties appropriate for inclusion in Parks inventory and provide interpretive opportunities at current parks –Parks’ inventory includes a number of sites which offer historic or cultural interpretive opportunities, either because the site itself has historic or cultural significance or because the site is representative of overall county history or culture. Parks provide a unique opportunity to describe the history of the county due to the geographic distribution of parks, diversity of park types and visitor base. Interpretive signage is one method of making information available across the Parks system, and other methods, such as Quick Response (QR) codes, are beginning to be used. Visitors may come to a park to hike, play sports or picnic, yet still have the opportunity to learn something about the site and its place in the history of the county. Currently, interpretive signage is provided at a number of parks, but a full interpretive program has not been developed and holds enormous potential to provide another facet to the recreation experience that park visitors currently enjoy. Parks periodically partners with the Snohomish County Historic Preservation Commission which “...seeks to identify, preserve and protect significant historic and archaeological properties that celebrates the rich history of Snohomish County” (Snohomish County) and it would be appropriate to consider collaboration on development on a cultural and historical interpretive program centered on Park facilities.

The demand identified was to provide interpretive (cultural and historic) opportunities at county parks, when appropriate and feasible. The full breadth of what this could entail is not currently defined, although it is known that opportunities exist within Parks’ system and need to be evaluated and a comprehensive plan developed for implementation. This effort will require either dedicated staff time

and/or an outside group/consultant to complete the evaluation and create recommendations for implementation. Implementation may be limited to further interpretive signage, or other options could be proposed. This demand is included as a placeholder for capital projects that may arise out of evaluation of an all-inclusive program and/or through consideration of individual sites and opportunities for interpretation.

PRO.7. Incorporate operational efficiencies within existing parks as part of maintenance activities and through consideration of additional efficiencies such as implementation of a naturalization program and/or sustainable operations initiative –Parks seeks to operate in a sustainable manner and incorporates energy and water efficiency improvements, as practicable, in the course of maintenance and life-cycle and renovation improvements. Replacement of light fixtures and installation of irrigation controls, which utilize rainfall data, are representative of the types of improvements that Parks currently strives to incorporate into day-to-day operations.

The demand identified is to replace aging infrastructure with updated energy/water efficient components. As discussed above, Parks maintenance already seeks to improve infrastructure with energy and water efficient components whenever possible. In the interest of improving operational efficiencies, Parks has explored a naturalization program, which is intended to reduce maintenance inputs at park facilities and also to reduce environmental impacts associated with park operations. At Kayak Point Regional Park, for example, several edge areas exist which are not used by the public, but are currently mown. Some of these lawn areas could be replaced with shrubs or let grow long and be cut back only one or two times a year, instead of the weekly treatment that they currently receive. This change would reduce staff time required to maintain the park, reduce carbon emissions from maintenance equipment and increase space available for wildlife use, all with minimal impact to the park user. Implementation and expansion of this program will require a site-by-site analysis to identify areas suitable for inclusion in the program, as well as potential user impacts, in order to develop a plan for execution. The benefits of this type of effort are significant and should be pursued as staff becomes available to develop plans. Addressing this need is not considered, at this time, to be a capital project, but further exploration of a naturalization program may identify capital needs, at which time funding would be sought.

PRO. 8. Develop Recreation Area Plans for the five identified Recreation Areas and improve recreation opportunities within those areas based on individual plan recommendations, as appropriate – This Park Element identifies five Recreation Areas that are considered to have natural groupings of recreational amenities and which can and should be enhanced and promoted for destination recreation.

Coordination has already begun within the Sky Valley and Seven Lakes Areas with other recreation providers to identify shared goals and opportunities for enhancing recreation opportunities within those areas. Formalized plans have not yet been completed, nor have formal coordination efforts been initiated within the other three areas, and completion of these processes are expected to result in recommendation of specific actions that will enhance and further the goals of the individual plans.

The demand identified is to develop Recreation Area Plans for the five identified Recreation Areas and improve recreation opportunities within those areas based on individual plan recommendations, as appropriate. It is envisioned that over the life of this Park Element, efforts to further these plans will occur and capital projects will be proposed to implement those plans. Needed improvements associated with this demand will be based on those efforts and addressed as they are identified.

Facility Needs

FAC.1. (Option 1) - Acquire one new Community Park property in the Lynwood/Mukilteo area – Parks should acquire one new Community Park site in the Lynwood/Mukilteo area in order to continue to serve new population and meet LOS standards. Under Growth Alternatives 2/3, two additional park sites will need to be acquired in order to meet anticipated 2035 population growth, but analysis for where these facilities should be located will be considered during the next Comprehensive Plan update, in order to account for park reclassifications, annexations and actual population growth.

FAC.1. (Option 2) - Develop facilities to meet LOS standards for provision of: active and passive facilities, miles of developed Regional Trails, waterfront miles and campsites, as well as parking spaces to support use of those facilities - Parks will consider projects to meet LOS standards on an annual basis through the CIP. Projects will be identified by Parks staff and stakeholders and will be prioritized for placement in existing parks. Where acquisition of a new facility to meet LOS needs is considered, proximity to the

population to be served will be minimized whenever possible.

FAC.2. Provide facilities to meet projected county age demographics, with particular focus on facilities to serve aging populations – During development of new park sites, a public involvement process is typically followed to include stakeholders and anticipated users in identifying features to be included in the new park. Parks solicits input into this process typically through community notices and meetings, fliers to surrounding residences, identification of stakeholders and partners and formation of advisory groups. This process works well for identifying demands for an individual facility, identifying what is appropriate for that facility and developing programming to meet the identified need(s).

This input process however tends to be very focused on immediate demands and generally participants do not project anticipated future needs. Parks staff takes the role of long term projection, and envisions the function of facilities past the immediately expressed demand. Identification of anticipated community demographics is of particular importance and provision of facilities that will meet the future needs of an aging user group is considered. Parks staff has identified that accessibility maximization is a key action that should be taken to ensure Parks is positioned to serve an aging community. A system-wide evaluation of Parks implementation of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations and guidelines was initiated in 2012 and areas for improvement were identified. Generally speaking, Parks has done very well in integrating accessibility into development of new facilities and across the system accessible features are generally provided. Challenges were identified at several natural parks where site conditions (such as regular flooding) affected the ability to provide accessible surfaces and at several older parks where site deterioration (particularly of paved surfaces) affected accessible routes. A summary of all areas identified for improvement was created and a prioritization scheme generated to improve accessibility whenever feasible. Funding for this work is provided through Parks' General Improvement fund, as well as through individual capital projects, which incorporate accessibility improvements as a part of larger park renovations (e.g. Kayak park renovation project).

Continued provision of features that are 'youth orientated' is important, but will include accessibility features so that all demographics of our community can participate and enjoy the diversity of activities that Parks has to offer. Miner's Corner Park, for example, includes an extensive playground, but the area includes accessibility features so that both disabled children can enjoy the playground and mobility

challenged adults can interact with their children as they enjoy the area.

The demand identified is to provide facilities to meet projected county age demographics, with particular focus on facilities to serve aging populations. Parks will continue efforts to identify emerging long-term trends in county age demographics and plan for anticipated population, while also continuing to focus on providing accessible parks to maximize use at those facilities. Specific projects that will help further this effort include continued improvements identified through the accessibility review and larger park renovations to address barriers caused by aging facilities (see FAC.4.).

FAC.3. Provide facilities which encourage active recreation and participation in recreation activities –

This demand is provided in response to trends of increasing obesity within Snohomish County. In the Snohomish Health District report “How Big are We?” (Snohomish Health District, 2007), six goals are presented to aid in prevention of obesity. Three of the goals are related to nutrition and three are related to physical activity. Of the three physical activity goals, all can, in some way be addressed through the provision of parks. The physical activity goals are:

1. Increase the physical activity opportunities available to youth
2. Increase the number of people who have access to free or low-cost recreational activities
3. Increase the number of community environments that are conducive to physical activity

These three goals can be met through provision of parks that encourage active recreation and participation in recreational activities. This demand is also reflected in the new RCO recommended level-of-service methodology which includes indicators which put special emphasis on access to park facilities by the public and the percentage of the population that participates in active outdoor activities (Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, 2008). As the role of parks in contributing to healthy communities continues to be better understood, it makes sense that new emphasis is placed on accessibility of parks and participation in recreation activities.

Providing facilities that encourage active recreation and participation in recreation activities is based upon an interest in encouraging physical activity, both by providing facilities that allow users to

participate in physical activity and by locating facilities so that are easily accessible for use. 'Active' recreation in this context is based upon the RCO definition of the term, which refers to recreation that is muscle powered, and is different from how active recreation is defined in Chapter I for identification of different recreation experience groupings. When considering facilities that provide for muscle powered activities, the majority of developed facilities provided by Parks include some type of 'active' recreation opportunity. It is estimated that 88% of developed Parks meet this criteria. Examples of recreation activities provided, which are considered to encourage active recreation, include trails (e.g. Centennial Trail, Meadowdale Beach and Portage Creek Wildlife Area), ballfields, and playgrounds.

The second implied component of this demand is to locate park facilities so as to be easily accessible by users. Each classification of park provided by Snohomish County includes a presumed service area, which is the distance that users are anticipated to travel to use the facility; Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks have the smallest presumed service area (1/4 mile and 5 miles respectively) while the service area for Regional Parks, Trails and Special Use facilities is considered to be county-wide. Analysis of 2010 population within service areas for each classification found that approximately 85% of unincorporated county population was within 5 miles of a county-provided Community Park.

The demand identified is to provide facilities which encourage active recreation and participation in recreation activities. Parks is currently doing very well at providing facilities which encourage active recreation and reviews distance to parks as part of LOS implementation. No separate actions are proposed therefore to address this demand as the need is already being addressed.

FAC.4. Renovate and/or Maintain Existing Facilities – This demand is based on stakeholder/public input as well as county Policy PR 2.A.3, which states:

Renovate aging facilities in order to maintain and improve existing use, as appropriate. Priority for renovation will be given to the following facilities:

- Parks which currently require significant maintenance due to facility age,
- Parks that need energy/water efficiency upgrades,
- Facilities that are heavily used and/or are significant revenue generators,
- Parks in close proximity to water bodies and which do not meet current stormwater

standards.

Stakeholder/public sentiment echoed this policy and went further to qualify that the county should focus on maintaining existing facilities rather than developing new sites. There will continue to be the need for new facilities to address demands identified in this Park Element, but there is also a need to renovate existing park facilities and make life-cycle replacements of aging park components. Consideration of additional development at several existing sites can also help meet recreation needs, without requiring development of a new facility.

Renovation – Many of the facilities in the Snohomish County Park system were developed over thirty years ago and have reached the point of needing renovation. Parks that fall into this category include: Kayak Point, Flowing Lake, Wenberg, the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, River Meadows, McCollum and Squire Creek. Interestingly, this list of aging parks also includes the entire list of camping facilities, which are a profit center for the department. Due to the age of these facilities, repairs at these parks are increasingly common and Parks’ campgrounds do not always include the modern amenities campers are looking for (e.g. increased power, internet access, larger camp sites, etc.). Typical on-going repairs at aging facilities include water and power issues, asphalt cracking, and stormwater related concerns. Larger issues related to these older facilities often include awkward ADA retrofits and lack of stormwater treatment. Renovations are needed at these facilities to replace aging infrastructure, to fully incorporate ADA accessibility and to address stormwater treatment and detention, all to support the goals of providing a quality visitor experience and of reducing operation costs and maintenance needs.

Based on the prioritization policy provided in the GPP, the parks listed above rank as follow:

Table 14. Park Renovation Prioritization

	Require Significant Maintenance ⁷	Need Energy/Water Efficiency Upgrades ⁸	Heavily Used and/or Significant Revenue ⁹	In Proximity to Water Bodies and Stormwater
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⁷ Based on maintenance time reporting from 2013. Net costs over \$7,000 are identified as significant.

⁸ Based on maintenance identified upgrade needs

				Improvements are Needed ¹⁰
Fairgrounds	X	X	X	
Flowing Lake		X	X	X
Kayak Point	X	X	X	X
McCollum	X	X		
River Meadows	X	X		
Squire Creek		X		
Wenberg	X	X	X	X

According to this ranking, Kayak Point, Wenberg, Flowing Lake and the Fairgrounds should be prioritized for renovation.

Life-Cycle Replacements – Parks maintains a wide variety of amenities and infrastructure, including playgrounds, pavement, irrigation systems, shelters, ballfields, restrooms, rental houses, etc. All of these structures have a life-cycle, at which point they need to be renovated or replaced. Regular maintenance can sometimes reduce the need for replacement (e.g. asphalt sealing to minimize larger failures) and continued investment into Parks' system is needed to maximize the life-cycle of structures, followed by replacement, or renovation, at the end of the structure life-cycle.

A capital replacement schedule is generally used to schedule replacements. However, because many life-cycle replacements have been deferred in recent years, Parks' system currently has a number of significant replacement needs. Parks has developed an Asset Maintenance Plan, which incorporates

⁹ Based on 2013 revenue collections and user counts. Revenue greater than \$150,000 is identified as 'significant' and visitor counts over 40,000 are identified as 'heavily used.'

¹⁰ Based on proximity of impervious surfaces to creek, lake or Puget Sound and type, if any, of stormwater treatment facilities.

both anticipated life-cycle replacements as well as adjustments to replacement schedules to allow for priority replacements as well as delayed replacement, if the asset is performing better than anticipated. This Asset Maintenance Plan is used as the basis for life-cycle funding requests through the county's CIP. Generally, projects valued at under \$40,000 are lumped together as 'General Improvements' in the annual CIP, while those over this value are identified and budgeted separately.

Additional Recreation Amenities – Public feedback encouraged the use of existing facilities, before developing new ones, in order to address recreation needs. GPP Objective PR 3.B¹¹ supports this sentiment and states “Consider opportunities to provide additional recreation facilities at developed park sites before improving undeveloped park sites.” As mentioned above, there will be times when acquisition and development of new facilities is needed, but many currently developed parks can accommodate features that will serve additional park visitors. Acquisition may still be needed if sufficient area is not available to satisfy the identified need, but in many cases, additional development at existing sites is suitable. Parks is sensitive to maintaining quality visitor experiences and will limit proposed park expansions if it is determined that expansion would detract from the experience that the park provides and/or if it is determined that expansion would cause negative impacts to the park resources. The location of existing parks will also determine if provision of additional amenities is appropriate or not. Consideration of anticipated user groups and proximity to those groups will be taken into consideration. *If LOS Option 2 is selected*, Parks level-of-service methodology will guide selection of projects intended to satisfy recreation needs related to population growth and will address the demand to provide amenities at existing parks.

The demand identified is to renovate and/or maintain existing facilities. Specific projects that are identified to meet this demand are:

- Renovation of Kayak Point, Wenberg and Flowing Lake Parks as well as the Evergreen State Fairgrounds
- Complete life-cycle improvements identified through the Asset Maintenance Plan

¹¹ Consider opportunities to provide additional recreation facilities at developed park sites before improving undeveloped park sites.

- *[If LOS Option 2 is selected]* Utilize level-of-service methodology to provide improvements to serve additional population at existing parks, when appropriate

FAC .5. Provide Additional Water Access, in Particular Saltwater Access – Snohomish County is a water-based community, with approximately 460 lakes, two major rivers and a multitude of smaller rivers, creeks and streams. Additionally, Snohomish County is bordered on its western edge by Puget Sound, offering incredible opportunities for water-based recreation and scenic viewpoint opportunities.

Snohomish County residents value access to water and ‘water access’ has ranked high on public interest surveys regarding recreation priorities. Many water-based recreation sites exist in the county and Parks provides Kayak Point, Meadowdale, Picnic Point, Lake Goodwin, Wenberg, Wyatt, Flowing Lake, Twin Rivers, Field’s Riffle and River Meadows Parks. However, within Snohomish County, saltwater access is relatively scarce.

According to the Washington State Coastal Atlas (Washington State Department of Ecology, 2010) there were 27 public beaches in 2010 within Snohomish County. Although this may seem like a high number, by comparison, the Coastal Atlas reported 50 public beaches in Skagit County, 97 in King County and 90 in Pierce County at the same time. This, along with the heavy use saltwater parks receive, indicates that a shortage exists and should be a priority for acquisition and expansion of existing facilities, where appropriate. The GPP also supports water access and Policy PR 4.A.5 states “Acquire land and develop additional parks with water access, with a priority on providing saltwater access.”

The demand identified is to provide additional water access, in particular saltwater access. Parks currently provides saltwater access at Meadowdale Beach, Picnic Point, the 10th St. Boat Launch (together with other owners City of Everett and Port of Everett) and Kayak Point Park. The waterfront areas of all these properties are fully developed and expansion to provide additional public access without additional acquisition is not thought to be feasible, with the exception of Meadowdale Beach Park. Additional access at Meadowdale may be possible through expansion of the parking area, or provision of additional parking areas, as use of the site is often limited by the number of available

parking spaces. At this time however, providing additional saltwater access at Meadowdale Park is complicated by issues associated with the culvert/public access under the Burlington Northern Sante Fe railroad grade, which separates the park from the waterfront. Efforts are currently underway to determine alternative access options for the park and progress in addressing this issue may support parking expansion at Meadowdale and help address the need for water access. The City of Lynnwood has ownership adjacent to Meadowdale that may be suitable for parking and a partnership could be explored to provide access.

Within the Snohomish River Estuary, Snohomish County currently owns approximately 1,800 acres and another 2,200 acres (approximately) is in other public ownership. Within this area, public access is provided at Spencer Island (Snohomish County and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife), at Langus Park (City of Everett) and at Ebey Waterfront Park (City of Marysville). While not the typical access that is envisioned when considering 'saltwater access,' the estuary is rich in recreational opportunities and can provide an integrated system of trails, kayaking, bird watching and hunting. The estuary is included as one of the five Recreation Areas addressed in this Park Element and completion and implementation of a Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Area Plan would help address the need for water/saltwater access.

In addition to efforts to increase public access within the Snohomish River estuary, acquisition of an additional saltwater access point on Puget Sound is needed. Opportunities for additional lake and river front acquisitions should also be considered and pursued, as appropriate.

Specific projects that would address the identified demand are:

- Acquire and develop at least one additional saltwater access property
- Develop the Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Area Plan and complete improvements/acquisition based on recommendations
- Improve saltwater access at Meadowdale Beach through access improvements in the vicinity of the railroad crossing

- Provide additional parking access to Meadowdale Beach
- Acquire and develop additional lake access park(s)
- Participate in capital improvement projects at the 10th St. Boat Launch as required through agreement with the Port of Everett and City of Everett
- Renovate Kayak Point Park to allow continued use of this popular facility

FAC.6. Provide Additional Trail Facilities - Providing trails has been a priority of Parks for many decades. Trails are immensely popular and are utilized by a wide variety of recreationists (hikers, bikers, skaters, equestrians, etc.) and also provide alternative transportation options. Parks has been focusing on acquisition and development of three major regional trails (Centennial, Whitehorse and Interurban Trails) and in 2012 completed a draft *Snohomish County Regional Trail Planning and Management Guidelines* (Trail Guidelines) (Snohomish County Department of Parks & Recreation, 2012). A vision is provided within this document for regional trails in Snohomish County that states:

“To connect communities, major recreation destinations, and urban centers with a system of trails for recreation and non-motorized transportation that provides the widest range of non-motorized travel modes and that emphasizes safety of users and accessibility to the greatest extent possible.”

This document provides standards for provision of regional trails and also identifies new, recommended trail and bikeway alignments. Parks works together with the Snohomish County Department of Public Works (Public Works), to identify connections between regional trails and street-based bikeways, in order to provide an integrated system of non-motorized transportation (bikeways and trails) across the county. Parks and Public Works seek to locate these facilities in order to provide connections between public facilities and to address the demand for an integrated system of passive and active parks and open spaces and trails.

The demand identified is to provide additional trail facilities. This demand is based upon public interest as well as county policy which states to “Prioritize development of regional multiuse linear parks

(Trails)¹².” Currently 36.5 miles of the regional trail alignment owned by the county are developed and/or open for public use. Continued development efforts are planned and interest is high in completing:

- The Centennial Trail alignment south from the City of Snohomish – this alignment extends to King County and will be the County’s first rails-with-trails project
- The Centennial Trail spur that connects the Cities of Snohomish and Monroe – this alignment is anticipated to receive significant equestrian use
- Identifying and providing a Centennial Trail connection to the City of Stanwood through the City of Arlington – investigations have not yet been initiated for this project and the connection may prove to be best accomplished through bikeway development
- Development of the Whitehorse Trail – this alignment extends between the City of Arlington and Town of Darrington and is also expected to receive significant equestrian use
- Acquisition and development of the trail alignment from the City of Monroe south to the county line
- Acquisition of trailhead sites throughout the system are expected to be needed as part of development of the owned corridors

In addition to bikeway routes that are being coordinated with Public Works, the Trail Guidelines document identifies a number of new, proposed, Regional Trails which follow Snohomish County Public Utility District No. 1 (PUD) power corridors. Specifically, these alignments are identified as the Three Lakes Trail, Tree Creeks Trail and Sky Valley/Greenway Connector Trail. Future provision of trails within these corridors will require approval and coordination with the PUD and are considered to be long-range projects, with a lower priority for completion than the three currently owned trails.

Public interest is also high for park based trails. During development of new park facilities, there is typically stakeholder/public interest expressed for provision of some type of trail system, whether it is paved or natural surface. Inclusion of trails in individual park facilities is typically based upon park user interest, and site suitability, and is determined on a case-by-case basis.

¹² PR 2.A.4

A number of park based trail systems are currently being considered:

- Heybrook Ridge County Park was first acquired in 2008 and was acquired partially to provide a back-country trail system. The park is 129 acres and, once developed, is expected to provide destination recreation. Development of a trail system at this park is planned to help address the demand for additional trails in Snohomish County.
- Additional acreage was acquired north of Flowing Lake in 2014 and is envisioned to expand use of the existing park, including trails for camper use and possible biking.
- The Reiter Foothills property was acquired in 2010 to provide a trailhead for adjacent state owned lands. Efforts are underway to develop this site and provide another trail access point to the Washington State Reiter Foothills Recreation Area.
- Property at West Lake Roesiger was acquired in 2011 and is located adjacent to a large holding acquired by the DNR and is planned for trailhead access to that property.
- Master planning for the Wellington Hills property has been underway since acquisition in 2012 and a park-based trail system is planned for enjoyment of this 101 acre park. Trail installation is anticipated to occur with park development.

Requests for additional trails, and modification of existing trails, are received frequently and are considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration natural resource, operational, park experience and funding impacts.

A number of specific trail projects (both regional and park-based) have been identified to address the need related to providing additional trail facilities:

- Develop the recently acquired Centennial Trail alignment as a rails-with-trails project from the City of Snohomish south into King County
- Develop the Centennial Trail spur between the cities of Snohomish and Monroe, with acquisition of properties as needed to provide trailheads and connectivity to other trail/bikeway systems
- Complete acquisition of the trail alignment from the City of Monroe to the King County line and

develop

- Identify and develop a connection to the Centennial Trail from the City of Stanwood through the City of Arlington (possible bikeway project)
- Continue to provide improvements along regional trail corridors to address public identified priorities
- Complete development of the Whitehorse Trail, including trailhead development
- Acquire and develop trailheads on all Regional Trails at a minimum spacing of 2 – 6 miles apart as recommended in the Snohomish County Regional Trail Planning and Management Guidelines (Snohomish County Department of Parks & Recreation, 2012)
- Support Public Works in the completion of the North Creek Trail
- Provide trail/bikeway connections between public facilities, as feasible
- Consider and provide paved or soft surface trails within parks, as supported by the community expected to be served by new park facilities, and as appropriate
- Develop trails at Heybrook Ridge County Park
- Develop Reiter Foothills trailhead
- Develop West Lake Roesiger trailhead
- Provide park-based trails within Wellington Hills County Park as a part of development
- Consider and provide additional Regional Trails and park-based trail projects as projects present themselves and pursue as appropriate and funding is available
- Make improvements to Regional Trails as identified and recommended through stakeholder/public comments as appropriate and feasible

Where these improvements relate to a specific facility, they are shown on the Trail Improvements Map located in Appendix D. Information on proposed bikeways is maintained by Public Works and should be obtained from that department.

FAC.7. Provide Additional Equestrian Recreation Opportunities – Representatives from the equestrian community were major participants in development of this Park Element and indicated a wide variety of equestrian needs/concerns related to recreational opportunities in Snohomish County. Equestrian issues are of particular importance in Snohomish County because of the unusually high number of horse

owners who reside here. Actual statistics are difficult to find but the Snohomish County 4-H Youth Horse Program webpage reports more than 1,600 youth participants and that it is the largest 4-H youth development program in the world. State statistics are also high, and a 2009 Seattle Times article noted that Washington State ranks 11th in number of total horses nationally and that the per capita ranking of the state is near the top (Broom, 2009). The per capita horse population in Snohomish County is also said to be the highest of all the counties in the nation, but statistics to back that claim up have not been found.

Parks' main equestrian facilities currently include Lord Hill Regional Park (forested trails), Centennial Trail (long distance multiuse trail) and the Evergreen State Fairgrounds (practice and competition arenas, event space and barns). Public meeting participants were very interested in a number of future Park developments, in particular development of the Whitehorse Trail, with associated trailheads, and trails accessed through the West Lake Roesiger property.

The demand identified is to provide additional equestrian recreation opportunities. Equestrian recreational needs are diverse and a central group representing all the various interests does not exist. Needless to say 'more' and 'better' was the common request of all the equestrian groups. This could equate to additional backcountry trails, better use of the Centennial Trail (interaction problems were a common equestrian complaint regarding this facility), improvements/expansion of the Fairgrounds, installation of carting courses and other improvements.

Specific projects identified to address the need for additional equestrian facilities are:

- Creation of a 'Snohomish County Equestrian Recreation Inventory' to identify opportunities for equestrian recreation enhancement through improvements within Parks system (e.g. linkages to Pilchuck Tree Farm system, which allows for equestrian use). This item does not specifically lead to a capital project, but completion of the inventory may guide future improvements.
- Renovation and improvements at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds
- Development of the Whitehorse Trail and provision of trailheads that support equestrian access

- Enhancement of the Paradise Valley Conservation Area trailhead to provide for better equestrian access
- Trail improvements at Lord Hill
- Development of the West Lake Roesiger trailhead

FAC.8. Provide additional leisure facilities, with specific emphasis on picnic areas, camping, playgrounds and off-leash areas – In recent years, interest in leisure facilities has increased. ‘Leisure facilities,’ as defined by Parks, includes picnic areas, camping, playgrounds, off-leash dog areas and viewpoints. Provision of these types of facilities, with the exception of camping, has typically been driven by community interest during development of a specific facility. Use of these facilities is high however and reservations for picnic shelters provided by Parks topped 864 in 2013, camping use averaged 90 site nights across Kayak Point, Flowing and Wenberg and playgrounds and off-leash dog areas seem to be in constant use. The location of current picnic areas, camping, playgrounds and off-leash areas is provided in the current Snohomish County Park Inventory Report (PIR). Parks provides access to viewpoints predominantly through trail use and specific use information for these features is not known.

Provision of camping is a focus for Parks and camping is currently provided at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Flowing Lake, Kayak Point, River Meadows, Squire Creek and Wenberg Parks. Use of these facilities is high and a Camping Team has been formed to identify priorities for improvement of existing facilities as well as opportunities for expansion. It has been recognized that a number of improvements are needed (e.g. power upgrades, site leveling, access road improvements) in order to maintain current use and that opportunities for expansion are present at a number of current campgrounds as well as parks that do not currently offer camping facilities. The Camping Team has identified and prioritized improvements to existing campgrounds, which are planned to be completed between 2014 and 2016. Following these improvements to existing facilities, expansion of camping at Kayak Point and Flowing Lake Parks are envisioned. Both facilities have space that is suitable for provision of additional camping and have existing Ranger presence, which would create efficiencies in serving the new camping areas. Recent interest in developing the Whitehorse Trail has also elevated development of camping along its alignment. Parks owns a number of properties which are suitable for camping provision and which would contribute to the experience of utilizing this unique trail. Additional opportunities for camping

expansion could also be realized at River Meadows, where camping is envisioned to eventually be relocated, and at a number of other parks.

The demand identified is to provide additional leisure facilities, with specific emphasis on picnic areas, camping, playgrounds and off-leash areas. A plan for camping improvements is currently being implemented and is focused first on improvement of existing facilities, followed by expansion of the facilities offered. Provision of the remaining leisure facilities identified as a priority, could occur through implementation of level-of-service standards [LOS option 2] and by prioritizing picnicking, playgrounds, viewpoints and off-leash areas.

Specific capital camping improvements that have been identified to address this need are:

- Expand camping at Kayak Point Park
- Expand camping at Flowing Lake Park
- Move camping at River Meadows to the upper terrace
- Make improvements to existing campgrounds as identified and prioritized by Camping Team
- Provide additional convenience camping
- Replace ranger stations at Kayak Point and Flowing Lake Parks
- Provide new camping areas as feasible and appropriate
- Develop camping opportunities along the Whitehorse Trail

FAC.9. Provide an aquatic facility – Aquatic facilities provided within Snohomish County generally fall into the realm of recreational pool, used by individuals for exercise and/or community swim lessons, or recreational facility, that includes features such as water play and ‘lazy river’ amenities. None of these facilities meet the demand identified above for a competition level aquatic facility.

The demand identified is to provide an aquatic facility. It is envisioned that this facility will include facilities to support competition events and enough other amenities to maximize return on investment.

Provision of this facility is anticipated to best be completed through a partnership with other recreation providers. As this facility is intended to serve regional needs and support competition events, the ultimate location should be sited near major transportation corridors.

FAC.10. Provide a regional athletic facility – Soccer and baseball facilities provided by cities and towns in Snohomish County, as well as Parks, are shown in Appendix B, and are identified based upon aerial photograph evaluation. The demand identified is to provide a regional athletic facility that can also serve multiple athletic needs, including sports such as lacrosse. Soccer and baseball were specifically evaluated because they are most common and because soccer fields, in particular, can serve multiple purposes. The map provided in Appendix B identifies the number and mix of fields at each site identified. Although some sites (e.g. Skykomish River Park) represent a large number of fields, the soccer fields provided are a mix of different sizes and the number of actual fields that could be involved in a tournament event would likely be reduced. Currently the site which provides the largest number of similarly sized fields is Fairfield County Park, which provides eight regulation sized fields.

The demand identified is to provide a regional athletic facility. It is envisioned that this facility will include a minimum of ten fields of the same type and will support multiple field types. Ideally this facility would include synthetic turf fields and lighting. Provision of this facility is anticipated to be best provided through a partnership with other recreation providers. As this facility is intended to serve regional needs and to support competition events, the ultimate location should be sited near major transportation corridors. The 2007 Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan envisioned that this facility would be located in the Marysville area, as recreation provider information at that time identified this area as being most in need. A new analysis at the time of project initiation will be completed to determine the best location for this facility.

FAC.11. Develop the Sky Valley Sportsman's Park – The Sky Valley Sportsman's Park was reconveyed to Snohomish County from the DNR in 2010. The property is located northeast of the City of Sultan and was reconveyed for public park purposes and more specifically to provide a public shooting facility. As of 2014, the property is undeveloped but efforts have been initiated to develop a master plan for site

development.

The demand identified was to develop the Sky Valley Sportsman's Park into a shooting facility. This need has already been noted and funding allocated to create development plans for the site. Parks has identified however that operation of a shooting range does not fit into the department's core competencies and a public/private and/or public/non-profit partnership will need to be entered into in order to support facility development and on-going operation. Completion of the master plan will provide a basis on which to identify a suitable partner and make the decision if development should be pursued.

FAC.12. Make Improvements to the Evergreen State Fairgrounds – The Evergreen State Fairgrounds (Fairgrounds) have been a treasured public resource and gathering place for many generations. Land acquisition and development began at the current site, north of the City of Monroe, in 1912. Major building phases occurred in the 1970s and 1980s and resulted in approximately 54 buildings on the site. The site hosts the annual twelve-day fair and approximately 850 other different events during the year. These events range from a weekly swap meet to equestrian competitions, and antique car shows. These shows generate significant revenue, although the majority of facility income is derived from the twelve-day annual fair. Due to the size of this facility, convenient location on Hwy. 2, and diversity of buildings, the site has been under consideration for opportunities to expand use.

The age of the Fairgrounds presents a particular concern. Buildings at this facility (besides the Shanahan cabin, which dates to 1900) range in date of construction from 1948 to the recent addition of the Gary D. Weikel Event Center in 2011. Over half of the main structures were built before 1980, including significant buildings such as the Grandstands, Commercial Building and Indoor Arena. A Redevelopment Initiative was created for this facility in 2009, which recommended demolition of seven of the buildings (Snohomish County Department of Parks & Recreation, 2009).

The demand identified for the Fairgrounds was to make improvements to the facility. This need has already been noted and funding allocated to create an updated master plan for the site. This effort

started in 2013 and will be used to identify strategic improvements which will support the many uses of the facility.

In addition to large, capital improvements that will be identified through the master planning process for the Fairgrounds, smaller lifespan renovations and facility improvements are identified by site staff and funded through income derived by the facility. Improvements range from roof replacement to utility upgrades and are prioritized by staff. Projects identified for completion are selected annually based on available funding and identified needs.

Specific capital projects to be completed for the Fairgrounds are expected to be derived from the master planning process as well as the 2009 Redevelopment Initiative and annual maintenance and operation program and improvements.

FAC. 13. Implement Sustainable Operations Action Plan – Snohomish County adopted a Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP) in 2013, which “...provides a strategic and systematic approach to integrating environmentally sustainable practices into County government operations” (Snohomish County Office of Energy & Sustainability, 2013). The SOAP is targeted at refining county day-to-day operations in order to reduce environmental impacts and includes a number of goals and objectives for implementation through 2017. Many of the goals and objectives included relate to county procedures, but a number of capital projects may be derived, as a means of meeting the goals and objectives of the document.

The demand identified is to implement capital improvements included in the SOAP, which are applicable to Parks. Goal 3, Conserve Resources and Use Renewable Energy Technology, includes objectives to reduce energy and potable water use and produce, use or procure renewable energy at several county sites including Parks’ McCollum pool, Willis D. Tucker Park and the Fairgrounds Event Center. In order to achieve these objectives, it is anticipated that improvements such as installation of solar panels, greywater reuse systems and/or appliance replacements (such as water boilers) may be needed. Funding for these projects and other improvements identified to implement the SOAP will be included

within the CIP as feasible. The SOAP currently addresses a five year period from 2012 – 2017. It is anticipated that future updates to this plan, or some other version thereof, will be generated and adopted and Parks will continue to evaluate capital projects needed to implement such efforts.

DRAFT

III. Implementation Measures

The following implementation measures are strategies that have been identified for meeting the recommendations of this Snohomish County Park and Recreation Element (Park Element):

1. Monitor level-of-service (LOS) standards and needed improvements to meet minimum standards.
The Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) completes an annual Statement of Assessment as part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that evaluates progress in meeting LOS standards for park classifications identified as necessary to support development. This annual review provides a check-in to ensure Parks continues to meet LOS standards and an opportunity to identify and address any concerns.
2. Seek partnership opportunities. It is recognized that there is immense value in working with other recreation providers to collectively meet recreation needs within the county. There are opportunities for efficiencies in providing facilities and services and synergy that is gained by coordinating efforts. Whenever possible, Parks will work to identify potential partners, including public/private and public/non-profit partners to collectively address common goals.
3. Pursue alternative funding opportunities. Many past park projects have been supported by grant funding provided by the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) as well as other sources. The value of grants to support park provision efforts is immense and Parks seeks to continue to identify and pursue grant funding opportunities. In addition to grants, Parks also seeks to maximize other non-county provided funding sources such as donations, sponsorships and other sources of funding.
4. Maintain flexibility. Although this document identifies specific projects and projections for the next eight years, unforeseen opportunities arise frequently when considering park projects. Unanticipated funding, unique purchase opportunities and partnership proposals are brought forward regularly for consideration. While this Park Element strives to anticipate actions over the

next eight years, it is understood that opportunities will arise that were not foreseen. This document is intended as a guide, but in no way should be construed to be an absolute listing of actions that will be undertaken by the Parks Department.

5. Seek public input into prioritization of projects. Parks actively seeks to gather input from park users regarding their priorities for new facilities, satisfaction with current facilities and recommendations for improvement. Parks gathers this input through public meetings, surveys and solicitation of comments and compiles this information in the Snohomish County Park and Recreation Visioning Plan (PRVP). This document is updated at least every six years, although it is anticipated that more frequent updates may occur in order to coincide with the mid-point and update schedule for this Park Element. The input collected in the PRVP will be used to prioritize projects contained within the Park Element and brought forward for funding in the CIP.
6. Take care of what we have. The public is very supportive of parks in their communities and values the role that they play in quality of life. Through development of this document, and as iterated in the PRVP, a strong sentiment was heard to focus on existing parks and take care of what is currently provided. While there is always excitement surrounding new facilities, there is also great love for current parks and interest in taking care of those facilities. Through development of this document, a number of parks have been identified for renovation needs. Completion of full-park renovation, as well as on-going maintenance and life-cycle replacements, will help ensure existing parks can continue to function and support current and future users.
7. Take the long view. Parks recently celebrated fifty years as a department (1963 – 2013) and is looking ahead to the next fifty years. We are excited about the future and continuing to provide facilities to serve future population and generations. We are committed to acting in a sustainable manner and always working to improve what we do. We provide an important service and believe that what we do contributes to quality of life for the county and that parks make the world a better place.

IV. Recommended Park Improvements

The following is a summary of specific projects identified in the Demand and Need analysis. This list is a basic summary and does not include improvements identified through the Asset Maintenance Plan, projects that are expected to be generated by analysis identified in this Snohomish County Park and Recreation Element (Park Element) (e.g. Recreation Area Plans and Historic/Cultural Interpretation Program) or unanticipated opportunities that the county may wish to pursue. This list identifies projects that are recommended for completion, as funding is available and as otherwise appropriate.

Table 15. Recommended Improvements

Need	Project	Description
FAC.1. Option 1	LOS Identified Improvements	Acquire <u>1 to 3</u> new Community Park properties prior to 2035. Acquisition of a property between Lynnwood and Mukilteo is prioritized and selection of additional sites will occur during the next update of this Park Element.
FAC.1. Option 2	LOS Identified Improvements	Provide 21 – 29 new active recreation facilities, 18 – 26 new passive recreation facilities, 7.4 – 10.4 new developed Regional Trails miles, 5.9 – 8.4 new miles of waterfront, 64 – 90 new campsites and 557 – 782 new parking spaces.
FAC.2.	ADA Improvements	Continued accessibility improvements at existing parks, as well as incorporation of accessibility features into larger capital projects and inclusion in new site developments.
FAC.4.	Park Renovations	Renovate Kayak Point, Wenberg and Flowing Lake Parks as well as the Evergreen State Fairgrounds
FAC.4.	Life-Cycle Replacements	Complete life-cycle replacements as identified and prioritized in the Snohomish County Department of Parks & Recreation (Parks) Asset Maintenance Plan.

FAC.4. LOS Option 2	Additional park improvements	<i>[If LOS Option 2 is selected]</i> Utilize level-of-service methodology to provide improvements to serve additional population at existing parks, when appropriate
FAC.5.	Water Access	Acquire and develop at least one additional saltwater access property
FAC.5.	Water Access	Complete the Snohomish River Estuary Recreation Area Plan and complete improvements/acquisition based upon recommendations
FAC.5.	Water Access	Improve saltwater access at Meadowdale Beach through access improvements in the vicinity of the railroad crossing
FAC.5.	Water Access	Provide additional parking access to Meadowdale Beach
FAC.5.	Water Access	Acquire and develop additional lake access park(s)
FAC.5.	Water Access	Participate in capital improvement projects at the 10 th St. Boat Launch as required through agreement with the Port of Everett and City of Everett
FAC.5.	Water Access	Renovate Kayak Point Park to allow continued use of this popular facility
FAC.6.	Trails	Develop park-based trails at Heybrook Ridge
FAC.6.	Trails	Develop park-based trails at Flowing Lake Park
FAC.6.	Trails	Develop Reiter Foothills trailhead
FAC.6.	Trails	Develop West Lake Roesiger trailhead

FAC.6.	Trails	Develop Wellington Hills County Park-based trails as part of site development
FAC.6.	Trails	Develop the CT south of the City of Snohomish to King County
FAC.6.	Trails	Develop the CT spur between the City of Snohomish to the City of Monroe and acquire land as needed for the improvement
FAC.6.	Trails	Complete trail acquisition from the City of Monroe to the King County line and complete development
FAC.6.	Trails	Identify and develop a connection to the Centennial Trail from the City of Stanwood through the City of Arlington (possible bikeway project)
FAC.6.	Trails	Continue to provide improvements along regional trail corridors to address public identified priorities
FAC.6.	Trails	Complete development of the Whitehorse Trail, including trailhead development and acquisitions, as needed
FAC.6.	Trails	Acquire and develop trailheads on all Regional Trails at a minimum spacing of 2 – 6 miles apart
FAC.6.	Trails	Support Public Works in the completion of the North Creek Trail
FAC.6.	Trails	Provide trail/bikeway connections between public facilities, as feasible
FAC.6.	Trails	Consider and provide paved or soft surface trails at parks as appropriate

FAC.7.	Equestrian	Renovate and improve equestrian facilities at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds
FAC.7.	Equestrian	Develop the Whitehorse Trail and provide equestrian trailheads
FAC.7.	Equestrian	Provide additional equestrian trailhead access to the Paradise Valley Conservation Area
FAC.7.	Equestrian	Make trail improvements at Lord Hill, as needed
FAC.7.	Equestrian	Develop West Lake Roesiger trailhead for equestrian access
FAC.8.	Camping	Expand camping at Kayak Point Park
FAC.8.	Camping	Expand camping at Flowing Lake Park
FAC.8.	Camping	Move camping at River Meadows to upper terrace
FAC.8.	Camping	Make improvements to existing campgrounds as identified and prioritized by Camping Team
FAC.8.	Camping	Provide additional convenience camping
FAC.8.	Camping	Replace ranger stations at Kayak Point and Flowing Lake Parks
FAC.8.	Camping	Provide new camping areas as feasible and appropriate
FAC.8.	Camping	Develop camping opportunities along the Whitehorse Trail
FAC.9.	Aquatic Facility	Acquire and develop a new aquatic facility to support competition events and maximize return on investment
FAC.10.	Athletic Facility	Acquire and develop a new regional athletic field facility

FAC.11.	Sky Valley Sportsman's Park	Complete master planning for Sky Valley Sportsman's Park and pursue development as indicated by master planning process and evaluation of partnership opportunities
FAC.12.	Evergreen State Fairgrounds	Complete master planning update process and pursue improvements as indicated by master plan
FAC.12.	Evergreen State Fairgrounds	Complete annual improvements utilizing fund 180 and project prioritization process
FAC.13.	Sustainable Operations Action Plan (SOAP) Implementation	Complete system improvements which further the goals of the SOAP.

V. Park Financing

All actions pursued by the Snohomish County Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) requires funding to support the effort. Funding for Parks is provided from a mix of sources. These include Snohomish County general funds, Real Estate Excise Tax (REET I and REET II), park impact mitigation fees, revenues generated at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Conservation Futures funding (available through a formal review process led by the Conservation Futures Program Advisory Board), grants, donations and sponsorships. Two kinds of park impact mitigation fees are currently collected, State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and Growth Management Act (GMA) based impact fees. GMA based fees were implemented in 2005, replacing SEPA based fees, and are used to make level-of-service (LOS) based acquisitions and improvements for park facilities identified as 'necessary to support development.' SEPA based fees continue to be collected on buildable lots established before implementation of the GMA based fees and are used for capital improvements at parks within the area that the funds were collected. The Evergreen State Fairgrounds partially operates as an enterprise fund and a portion of revenues generated at the site are used for facility improvements. Revenues generated through user fees (e.g. camping revenues) are deposited into Snohomish County's General Fund.

Parks generates revenues through a variety of methods, which are distributed back to the General Fund (with the exception of the Evergreen State Fairgrounds generated revenues), and which partially offset the funding provided for Parks operations. In 2012, Parks generated 72.1% revenue of the general funding received for that year. This equates to one of the highest return on investments for any park system in the United States.

Additional funding collection may be available to Parks through a variety of marketing strategies. These include such things as sponsorships, selling of naming rights and donations. For the first time, Parks has recently created and filled a marketing staff position to pursue these possibilities, both for the Evergreen State Fairgrounds, and for the entire Parks system.

Identification of funding for specific projects is determined each year through the county's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP allocates funding for the first year of the CIP then projects funding over an additional five years, taking into consideration different funding sources. Detailed information on the individual park projects is included in the Snohomish County Park Improvement Plan (PIP), which is adopted as part of the CIP. The PIP describes anticipated funding source(s) as well as the funding amount for each project.

Development of the annual CIP is cooperative process, involving Parks, Finance and the Executive and Council offices. Available funding and project priorities are reviewed and decisions made on which projects are selected for inclusion. Development of the CIP is informed by this Snohomish County Park and Recreation Element (Park Element) as well as the current Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Visioning Plan (PRVP), which identifies public park priorities. Adoption of the CIP typically occurs around the end of November each year and goes into effect on January first of the following year.

Included within the CIP is a 'Parks - General Improvements' line item which supports minor contracted and in-house capital improvements that are identified by Parks through an analysis of safety priorities, opportunities for enterprise development (increased return on investment), increases in efficiencies and effectiveness, partnerships, public input and other criteria that lead to project prioritization. Examples of work that has been funded through this line item include Americans with Disabilities Act improvements, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit improvements, playground enhancements, etc.

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Appendix A - The Benefits of Parks

The Benefits of Parks

Quality of Life

How do parks enhance quality of life? First and foremost, parks maintain and improve the physical and mental health of its users. Access to fresh air, sunshine, and physical activity promote good health for a life time. Secondly, preserving natural areas as parks supports local flora and fauna, protects water quality, and promotes stewardship programs. Regional Trails ('linear parks') provide transportation alternatives that can result in reduced vehicular trips and associated impacts. Parks also enhance communities by building relationships, including diverse user groups, and providing safe environments to play that encourages a "sense of belonging" which helps build community identity. Finally, parks support local and state economies through tourism, increasing property values of homes, and attracting investment.

Health Benefits

Healthcare costs have become the single biggest expenditure in U.S. society (Godbey & Mowen, 2010). Providing physical activity opportunities through parks provides inexpensive preventative health care. "Public parks and recreation services are becoming part of the healthcare system of the United States and are now recognized as such" (Godbey & Mowen, 2010).

Recreation Relieves Stress and Depression

Mental health challenges from stress are becoming increasingly common in this demanding and busy world. As stress builds, the body reacts with an increase in adrenaline. The increase of adrenaline results in a "fight or flight" response with an increase in heart rate, sweating, muscle tension, feelings of anxiety, and depression (California State Parks, 2005).

Anxiety and depression produce serious mental health issues. These can manifest into feelings of despair, loneliness, and deep and prolonged sadness. It is estimated that 34 million adults in the United States will suffer from depression at some time in their lives (Kessler P. R., 2003). As a result of depression, 29,350 people committed suicide in 2000, which made it the third leading cause of death in the United States among 15 to 24 year olds (Minino, Arias, Kochanek, Murphy, & Smith, 2002).

Recreation and physical activity can alleviate the symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety. Physical activity improves self-esteem by releasing chemicals called endorphins into the bloodstream (California State Parks, 2005). Endorphins are released during activity, such as walking, swimming, or hiking, and produce a feeling of well-being known as "runners high."

Coupled with physical activity, the social connections that are encouraged by park use play a crucial role in alleviating the symptoms associated with depression and anxiety. Drawing people out of their houses and into the fresh air, parks provide a social atmosphere that encourages community connections (California State Parks, 2005). Community connections create "support systems" for individuals which have been found to encourage a feeling of belonging and a sense of well-being that reduce the feelings of isolation and loneliness that are associated with severe anxiety and depression.

Play and Recreation Combats Obesity and Obesity Related Diseases

Obesity is a major health concern and is closely linked to physical inactivity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have defined over weight and obesity as, "[R]anges of weight that are

greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height that have been shown to increase the likelihood of certain diseases and other health problems” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

Obesity is directly correlated to a sedentary lifestyle. More and more people are spending their free time indoors, in front of the television (California State Parks, 2005). Obesity and its related health problems impact all ages, genders, and socio-economic groups.

The Snohomish County Health District estimated that in 2007 upwards of 60 percent of Snohomish County adults were overweight or obese (Sayler, 2007). Additionally, a report from the University of Washington found that almost one in four 8th, 10th and 12th graders in Washington are overweight and the number is climbing (Sayler, 2007).

Individuals who are overweight and/or obese can have significant health problems. Lack of physical exercise coupled with obesity reduces the immune response in individuals. A reduced immune system is shown to exacerbate or cause mortality and chronic medical conditions such as: coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, gallbladder disease, and respiratory disease, some cancers, arthritis, and osteoporosis (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

Parks support a healthy lifestyle that can result in a healthy weight. The CDC has found that recreational activities help people maintain a healthy weight and can potentially reduce and even reverse the effects of obesity (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

Snohomish County Parks provides a wide variety of opportunities for the community to remain or get physically fit such as walking the Centennial Trail, swimming at Flowing Lake, skate-boarding at Martha Lake Community Park, playing baseball at Lake Stevens Community Park, or just walking one of the vast number of park trails. Parks encourage the community to get out—and get active.

Develops Healthy Youth

Physical activity and recreation plays a fundamental role in a “child’s mental, physical, social and emotional development” (Ginsburg, 2007). Getting out into nature to play can develop healthy cognitive function, promotes social interactions and emotional well-being, and improves behavior in school and at home.

Play is critical to develop a child’s curiosity and imagination. Whether in a playground or in a natural setting, free play allows children to experience their world in a new and exciting way (Ginsburg, 2007). Finding a seashell at a local beach, gathering leaves for a art project, or using the fallen log for a game of “king of the mountain” encourage the sense of wonderment only nature can provide. This wonderment peaks the curiosity that can lead to development of a child’s critical thinking, cognitive skills, and emotional development. Cooperative activities encourage inclusion and acceptance along with social skills and abilities to handle conflict. Play not only promotes healthy cognitive function but healthy minds and bodies.

When children do not receive adequate exercise they can display feelings of anger and frustration in stressful situations. As stress builds up, so does adrenaline. If this adrenaline is not released through frequent and adequate exercise, children and adults will experience anxiety and at times depression. This can manifest itself into displays of hostility, aggression, and frustration. Receiving frequent exercise through play can help to release the “stress”, regulate mood swings, and improve attention span. A study of a school in Colorado found that providing 20 minutes of exercise a day will increase alertness and decrease “acting out” in all age groups (California State Parks, 2005).

Snohomish County Parks provide many opportunities for the youth of the region and local communities to experience nature and keep active. Numerous trails, playgrounds, beaches, fishing ponds, a community swimming pool and skate park are but a few of the opportunities that Parks provide for the County’s youth and children.

Access to Fresh Air Improves Health

The majority of American adults (ages 12 and over) spend 90 percent or more of their time indoors. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "indoor air is more than twice as polluted as outdoor air" (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2011). Taking 15 minutes a day to go outside in a natural setting brings in the fresh air that is critical to maintaining good health.

Wind and weather naturally diffuse pollutants within the air, increasing the quality of the air that we breathe. This "high quality air" increases the body's ability to uptake oxygen into the body's cells. A number of health benefits result from adequate oxygen uptake. "High oxygen levels in the blood have been linked to decreasing cancer growth, increasing lung capacity thus reducing the effects of respiratory disease and boosting the immune system" (Miller, 2011). In addition, getting out and breathing fresh air is shown to increase the body's metabolism, aid in sleep, and improve chronic skin conditions (Miller, 2011).

Parks get people out into nature to play and recreate in the fresh air. As people play, they breathe in the clean air and clear oxygen that fuels the body toward greater health.

Access to Sunshine Provides Essential Vitamin D and UV Radiation

The sun's rays do more for a person than give that golden tan. Sunshine provides essential vitamin D that helps strengthen bones and maintains their density (Gunnarsson, 2011). While certain foods contain vitamin D (like milk), the vitamin D that can be obtained from sunshine is higher in quality and quantity. "The recommended daily allowance [of vitamin D] is about 600 IU, whereas we can produce more than 10,000 IU in about 30 minutes of full sun exposure, which is over 15 times more than the government recommends for us to take" (Gunnarsson, 2011). Sunshine is the key ingredient in creating and keeping strong bones throughout a lifetime. Studies have shown that adequate access to vitamin D strengthens bones for the long term to prevent osteoporosis and osteomalacia (Miller, 2011). Vitamin D influences other chronic diseases as well. Adequate supplies of vitamin D have been shown to combat multiple sclerosis, type 1 diabetes, and heart disease (Gunnarsson, 2011). Sunshine is obtained from getting outdoors into it. Parks provide spaces in nature to access the critical rays that the sun has to offer. So, it seems that playtime in the sunshine is not only medicine for the soul, but is a critical component of a long and healthy life.

Environmental Protection

Snohomish County Parks provide an essential ingredient to environmental protection through the conservation of open spaces. Snohomish County Parks boasts facilities that preserve shorelines, wetlands, forested areas, and meadows. These open spaces provide ecosystem services such as the natural balance of protection from pollution and flooding. The provision of open spaces provide inexpensive pollution control for the ground and water, reduces the risk of flooding, and preserves and provides critical habitat for native flora and fauna as well as opportunities for the public to interact and build appreciation for nature.

Water Management through Open Space Preservation

Open spaces, especially forested areas and wetlands, provide critical functions for managing water quality and quantity. Wetlands and floodplains slow water flow and provide natural water purification which supports aquifer recharge and overall increased water quality. Forested areas absorb water into the root systems of trees and plants, thereby reducing water flow and risks from flooding.

Water quality, throughout the country, is under threat from storm water pollution. Stormwater is water that runs off of pavement, roofs, highways, and parking lots. As the water runs off these impermeable surfaces it picks up whatever pollutants it finds along the way. Fertilizers, chemicals,

pesticides, motor oil, gasoline and many other pollutants flow with the runoff into the nearest water body, such as stream, river or ocean.

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (Comptroller General of the United States, 1979), "on those lands with natural ground cover only 10 percent of precipitation becomes runoff, while 90 percent infiltrates into the ground. However, when 75 percent of the site is covered with impervious surfaces, 55 percent of the precipitation becomes runoff. On paved parking lots, 98 percent of precipitation becomes runoff. The runoff is often contaminated and must be treated." (Comptroller General of the United States, 1979).

It is often necessary to install expensive water treatment facilities to treat contaminated surface or groundwater supplies. On the other hand, natural drainage and water management provided by open space can significantly reduce municipal costs for water treatment. "A 2002 survey of 27 water suppliers found that for every 10 percent increase in forest cover in a municipal water system's watershed, costs of water treatment decreased by 20 percent" (Comptroller General of the United States, 1979).

In addition to a reduction in water quality, a loss of land cover exacerbates flooding during storm events. Floodplains and wetlands are nature's way of controlling flooding. When they are paved, or covered with other impervious materials, the natural process that would slow the flood waters down and infiltrate them into the soil is changed and this can lead to extensive property damage and risks to human safety (National Flood Insurance Program).

Preservation of open spaces, such as wetland or forested parks, acts to mediate the issues associated with storm water run off. Wetland plants take up pollutants into their root systems and help to trap and filter out contaminated sediments (United States Environmental Protection Agency). In addition, the specialized plants and soils slow the flow of the incoming storm water and allow it to infiltrate into the ground. This allows not only for inexpensive water treatment but for the ground water to be recharged (United States Environmental Protection Agency). Recharging the aquifer is critical for clean and sufficient water supply.

Open spaces reduce the risks associated with flooding as well. Wetlands areas act as a sponge, slowing the flow of water by taking it up into the root system of trees and plants or absorbing it into the hydrophilic soils and plants (United States Environmental Protection Agency). Within forested areas, trees soak up excess water and anchor soils to the ground to prevent erosion (Coder, 1996). "Community tree and forest cover intercepts, slows, evaporates, and stores water through normal tree functions, soil surface protection, and soil area of biologically active surfaces" (Coder, 1996). Protection of these areas has the potential to significantly reduce property damage to homes, buildings, and infrastructure during storm events and could save federal, state, and local tax payers millions of dollars for disaster relief.

The open spaces of the park system provide pollution and flood protection that reaches far beyond the park boundaries. By preserving the natural system of water pollution and flood control, the whole region benefits from an inexpensive way to have clean and clear drinking water and an increased security from the dangers of flooding.

Open Space Preservation Protects Biodiversity

The single greatest threat to animal biodiversity is habitat loss. It is estimated that 5,200 animals, including one in eight bird species, face extinction due to habitat loss from land conversion (National Parks 2011). Thousands of acres of natural space each day are converted to other uses (APA 2010).

Parks play a critical role in land conservation. Firstly, they often conserve, large patches of undisturbed land. This can be comprised of forested areas, shorelines, meadows, or even deserts. To many species, size does matter. For example, the Northern Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis*) faced near extinction in the early 1990's due to rampant loss of habitat. The owl relies on undisturbed stands of

mature, old growth forests for nesting. Large scale logging caused the population numbers of the owl to plummet.

Secondly, through the provision of trails and parks, these properties preserve habitat corridors. Habitat corridors provide connections between fragmented areas of land. They provide connections or links between patches of habitats. These may be provided through urban parks, buffer zones along trails, and a variety of other park types. These areas of “linkage” allow migratory animals and birds places of rest or protection when making their way to their nesting or breeding habitats.

Snohomish County Parks play a critical role in this effort. Throughout the county the Parks Department preserve sensitive wetlands, forested areas, urban corridors, meadows, and shorelines. Some examples include:

- **Spencer Island Wildlife Preserve:**
 - Estuary/ wetland that provides habitat for thousands of native migratory and resident birds.
- **Kayak Point Regional Park:**
 - Forested park adjacent to the Puget Sound - provides habitat for migratory and resident birds, as well as local marine mammals and fish.
- **Twin Lakes Park**
 - Urban corridor for migratory birds and animals.
- **The Centennial Trail:**
 - Provides over 26 miles of trail with protected buffer zones that act as a habitat corridor for thousands of migratory birds and animals.

And the list goes on. Throughout the county, parks are provided that preserve critical habitat that allow for local, regional, and migratory animals to not only survive but to thrive within the increasingly urbanized environment of the county.

Opportunities to Connect to Nature and Promote Stewardship

Parks provide opportunities to connect with nature. Each experience with nature emotionally connects the user to his/her surroundings. Activities like bird watching, walking or hiking a trail, swimming in the local lake, or even fishing with family members allows people from all ages to enjoy and value nature at its finest. These experiences help to develop a lifelong relationship between the park user and the environment of the natural world.

This connection is the key component in promoting positive attitudes towards ecosystem preservation that often result in an improved stewardship of the land. And the more familiar the user becomes with a particular natural setting or park, the more likely that they will understand and appreciate the benefits that only nature can provide.

“Participants’ feelings of care and connectedness for the environment were higher while they were in the park and after they exited the wilderness than when they initially came to the wilderness according to a study of 62 groups in the Okefenokee Wilderness” (Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001). The feeling of connectedness to a natural place increases people’s perception of the value of the environment. When people gain a new or renewed sense of appreciation for a particular natural setting it can spur a sense of obligation to protect it and others like it. “Ninety-five percent of Americans agree that outdoor recreation is a good way to increase peoples’ appreciation for nature and the environment” (ARC 2000).

This appreciation for environment often crosses boundaries into a sense of community responsibility to protect the environment for others and for the sake of the animal inhabitants. “Optimal outdoor recreation experiences can result in a state of connectedness with the earth and its

creatures which in turn, can result in a greater sense of appreciation for the environment and the community of life" (McDonald & Schreyer, 1991).

Alternative Transportation

Transportation is the largest single source of air pollution in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of gas consuming vehicles congest U.S. highways each day pumping hazardous organic and non-organic compounds into the atmosphere. "Pollution from cars, trucks, and other transportation causes over half of the carbon monoxide, over a third of the nitrogen oxides, and almost a quarter of the hydrocarbons in our atmosphere" (Union of Concerned Scientists 2008 p1). The "big three" pollutants that cause health officials and scientists the most concern are:

- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), is a toxic by-product of gasoline combustion and is a very harmful and corrosive vehicle emission. Exposure to NO₂ can irritate the lungs and lower the body's resistance to respiratory infections, especially within the young and the elderly (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2011). Nitrogen dioxide poses a threat to the environment as well. NO₂ falls to earth as acid rain (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2011). When the acidic rainwater comes into contact with plant life, it destroys the tissues. This has laid waste to thousands of acres worldwide.
- Sulfur-oxides (Sox), from emissions, react with sunlight to produce ozone, which is commonly known as smog. On a sunny day, this brown haze hovers above all traffic congested areas. Exposure to ozone can cause skin irritation and respiratory distress (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2011).
- Carbon dioxide (CO₂): Increases in CO₂ in the upper atmosphere cause warming of the atmosphere that scientists believe threatens the world with global climate change. Losses of critical water bodies and desertification will lead to food and water shortages, especially within developing nations, and could lead to widespread famine, disease, and potential conflicts. The warming of the oceans could lead to the loss of biodiversity and to the release of water from the ice shelf in Antarctica that will raise the oceans, resulting in loss of shorelines and in many cases displacement of millions of low-lying island inhabitants.

Providing alternatives to fossil fuel burning transportation is essential to offset some of the environmental and health damage caused by a "gas guzzling" society. Providing transportation corridors such as trails can encourage the use of walking or bicycling to work. The Federal Highway Administration found that in a 12 month period walking and bicycling displaced:

- 420 million gallons of gasoline used in passenger vehicles
 - Between 4.2 and 15.5 million tons of CO₂
 - Between 375,000 and 1.35 million tons of Carbon Monoxide (CO)
- (Ruthven, 2007).

Trails, such as the Centennial Trail, provide alternative transportation opportunities for Snohomish County residents. Bicyclists, walkers, and equestrians are afforded the opportunity to utilize an alternate means of transportation, to work and to play. This can decrease the overall use of cars on the roads, reducing traffic congestion and decreasing air pollution countywide.

Community Enhancement

Parks provide opportunities for people of all walks of life to spend time together and play. They encourage family time and socialization with others within the community. Recreation brings families and neighbors together, encourages safer, cleaner neighborhoods, and creates a livelier community atmosphere (California State Parks, 2005). Parks and recreational facilities also help improve a community's image, socioeconomic status and enhance the area's desirability.

The community is built through a tapestry of associations. A sense of belonging is critical to building strong neighborhoods with social connections. Parks get people together. They help weave the family, children, different ethnic groups, the disabled, and the elderly into a cohesive network.

Strengthens Family Bonds

Families are increasingly taxed for time together. Demanding work schedules, homework responsibilities, and after school activities put stress on the family unit. Quality time spent together is a critical component to promote a healthy family unit. Families that play together often stay together. Leisure time spent together has been shown to strengthen marriages and connect children with their parents. Playtime together can build strong family units that encourage the health and well-being of adults and children alike. "When families participate together in leisure activities bonding can occur and the related benefits can include family satisfaction, interaction and stability" (California State Parks, 2005)

Parks provide recreational opportunities where families can bond and build close relationships. Quality time spent outdoors without the distractions of the television, internet, or video games gives families the opportunity to enjoy each other while they experience nature. Activities such as picnicking, camping, or going on a family hike encourages the building of critical social ties that keep families healthy, happy, and together.

Promotes Cross Cultural Relationships

We live in a culturally diverse world. Race, religion, or lifestyle, often cause groups to have little or no interaction with each other outside of the school yard or work place. This lack of social interaction can help to breed fear, cultural clashes, and ultimately isolation of ethnic and cultural groups.

Public spaces and Parks provide a backdrop that can bring different cultures and ethnic groups together. Recreation promotes positive contact between different ethnic groups in a non-threatening atmosphere (California State Parks, 2005). When recreating and "having fun" people tend to be less concerned with their differences. This reduces the unfamiliarity of the "ethnic" differences forging relationships through shared commonalities and respect of the cultural differences. This can strengthen the overall community by creating a spirit of inclusiveness.

Promotes Social Inclusion and Physical Health for the Disabled

It is estimated that one in five people suffer from a disability. However, "people with disabilities are less likely to engage in regular moderate physical activity than people without disabilities, yet they have similar needs to promote their health and prevent unnecessary disease" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Those in wheelchairs require regular physical activity to maintain a healthy weight and develop critical muscle tone in the upper body. When muscle mass is lost, whatever activity that the disabled person was able to do before becomes more challenging (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). As activities become more challenging the disabled person may begin to gain unhealthy weight and feel depressed. In addition, the added extra weight can significantly exacerbate existing physical problems and even create new ones. Diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, osteoporosis, and coronary heart disease are common in people who have an unhealthy Body Mass Index (BMI) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

One of the major obstacles to keeping the disabled active is a lack of choices in activities. Often there are barriers to physical activity and recreation that prevent the disabled from making healthy choices. These barriers can be either physical (the inability to gain access to the program through an architectural barrier) or they can be social (a fear of exclusion leading to isolation).

Parks provide choices in maintaining physical and social activities for the disabled. They provide opportunities for all users, disabled and non-disabled to enjoy nature and recreational programs and work to remove barriers to recreational access. The 2010 updated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 2004 Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) require that parks provide a system-wide approach to barrier removal in the services they provide. Some standards within the newly adopted 2010 ADA standards are park specific. Examples of this include but are not limited to: disabled access to playgrounds, picnic areas, campgrounds, beaches, sports fields and courts, trails and a variety of other park provisions.

The newly adopted standards promote equality in park services and work to give the disabled community access to natural spaces to enjoy and recreate with each other and the community at large. This not only provides access to physical activity that can lengthen and improve the health of the disabled but helps them form community connections that are essential for mental health and well-being. Community connections provide support systems that can prevent feelings of isolation and exclusion.

The Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing services and programs that are inclusive to people with a variety of abilities. The Park Department is currently evaluating its parks for ADA accessibility and developing an action plan to improve services for accessibility countywide. Currently the Parks Department provides ADA accessible camping in three of its parks (Flowing Lake, Wenberg and Kayak), an ADA accessible trail (the Centennial Trail), an ADA accessible pier (Lake Goodwin Community Park) and a variety of ADA accessible playgrounds, picnic areas, and wildlife viewing areas.

Additionally, Snohomish County Parks provides special needs specific programs and activities through the Specialized Recreation Program. Activities through the Specialized Recreation program are tailored to bring together the disabled throughout the county to form social ties and build relationships. Some of the activities that the program offers are: movie nights, quarterly dances, summertime barbeques, and specialized outings that are geared toward having fun in a safe and nurturing environment.

Enhances Community Safety

Well maintained parks promote use and use deters crime. The presence of park users in and around the facilities is an excellent deterrent (California State Parks, 2005). A park that is frequently used by great numbers of people deter those who would use the park for illicit purposes. "When adjacent to residential areas, green spaces have been shown to create neighborhoods with fewer violent and property crimes and where neighbors tend to support and protect one another" (American Planning Association (APA) 2010p1)

Community identity is built on social connections. Well maintained parks provide an atmosphere of recreation and play that support frequent, casual contact among neighbors. They bring together young and old, rich and poor, diverse ethnic and cultural groups, the disabled and non-disabled. They create neighbors out of strangers and reduce crime through a community sense of connection. People are less likely to steal from a friend than a stranger or inflict harm on someone they know and spend time with (APA 2010).

Creating social connections to combat crime is not the only way that parks reduce crime in the community. It has been found that, " [t]ime spent in natural surroundings relieves mental fatigue, which in turn relieves inattentiveness, irritability, and impulsivity, recognized by psychologists as precursors to violence" (California State Parks, 2005).

Economic Benefits of Parks

Each year, people take to the “great outdoors” to recreate and relax. Whether taking out the bikes or kayaks for the day trip or “stay-cation”, packing up the mini-van with camping gear for the family vacation, or even hauling the boat or recreation vehicle to the nearest campground, people are spending time in the outdoors.

National, State, and local parks generate billions of dollars in tourist monies. “Across the U.S., parks, rivers, scenic lands, wildlife areas, and open space help to support the \$502 billion tourism industry” (City of Columbia, Missouri, 2007). Only a small portion of these dollars are actually spent within the parks. As people make their way to their park destination they will spend billions of dollars within adjacent local communities for gas, lodging, food, supplies, and community tourist attractions. Each dollar spent from tourism changes hands between the tourist, local business owners, and employees. Tourism dollars can be so critical to local economies that they are in a sense a “tourist town” and are reliant on tourism dollars. This is especially true with areas that are “destination” spots that entice wildlife enthusiasts to come in and spent money. Wildlife hobbies are big business and support millions of jobs. For example, “Sport fishing generated \$108.4 billion in 1996, supporting 1.2 million jobs and wildlife photographers contributed 84.5 billion to the U.S. economy” (National Parks Association 2010p1).

Increased Property Values

Natural open space and trails are prime attractions for potential home buyers. When a park or protected area is located near or adjacent to residential property, the homes are considered more desirable and in turn can demand higher sales prices. “According to research conducted by American Lives, Inc. for the real estate industry, 77.7 percent of all home buyers and shoppers in the study rated natural open space as either “essential” or “very important” in planned communities. Walking and bicycling paths ranked third. A community design which offers quiet and low traffic was the top ranked feature” (National Park Service, 1995).

The demand for green space can lead to an increase in property values within the community. One study found that the value of properties near Pennypack Park in Philadelphia increased from about \$1,000 per acre at 2,500 feet from the park to \$11,500 per acre at 40 feet from the park (National Park Service, 1995). Another study listed on the National Trails Training Partnership website, stated “housing prices declined an average of \$4.20 for each foot of distance from a greenbelt up to 3,200 feet [and in another] neighborhood this figure was \$10.20 for each foot of distance” (National Park Service, 1995). The increase in property values translates to augmentation of tax dollars being spent within the local government.

“A study of the impacts of greenbelts on neighborhood property values in Boulder, Colorado, revealed the aggregate property value for one neighborhood was approximately \$5.4 million greater than if there had been no greenbelt.” This greenbelt is estimated in producing an additional \$500,000 in property taxes that went directly into the local government (National Park Service, 1995).

Attracting Investment

Parks and green spaces attract investment from business and industry. Greenways, rivers and trails can play an important role in increasing a community’s quality of life, and are attractive to businesses and corporations. Office sites adjacent to rivers, trails and greenway are attractive to businesses for a number of reasons. Firstly, green spaces and parks help promote fitness by providing convenient opportunities for exercise, such as walking, jogging, or exercise courses.

Businesses find that employees that keep physically fit have reduced healthcare costs and take fewer “sick days” than those who are not. “The American Heart Association conducted a study of 8,301 men and women employed at 35 corporations across the country and found that those who were the

most physically fit, measured by a rigorous “step test” and body fat measurement, had a 37 percent lower absenteeism rate than those who were unfit. Another study by the American Heart Association reported that Control Data Corporation in Minneapolis, Minnesota saw a 30 percent reduction in medical claim costs and a 35 percent reduction in the length of hospital stays for people participating in a health promotion program” (National Parks Association, 1995). Healthy employees increase productivity and contribute to a business’s fiscal “bottom line.” By locating a business near or adjacent to a natural space or park the employees stay healthy and the company increases profits.

Public parks and open spaces play a critical role in developing a community. They enhance quality of life by promoting physical and mental health, develop community connections and a “sense of place”, protect and improve the natural environment, enhance community safety, and support a strong economy. It is essential that they continue to be provided and protected for the continued and future health and well-being to all who--get out and get active.

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Appendix B - Facilities Provided by Other Jurisdictions

Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Recreation Facilities By Other Providers

**Snohomish County
Recreation Facilities**

National Forest

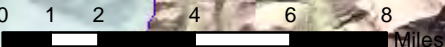
State Parks

City/Town Parks

County Parks

Schools

Mt.Baker - Snoqualmie National Forest



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Date: 6/20/2014



Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Soccer and Baseball Facilities

Public Provider Field Inventory

Sum of Fields

7.1

Soccer

Baseball

CityPark2014

CityPark2014

Snohomish County Parks

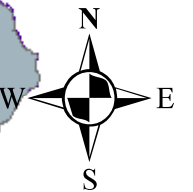
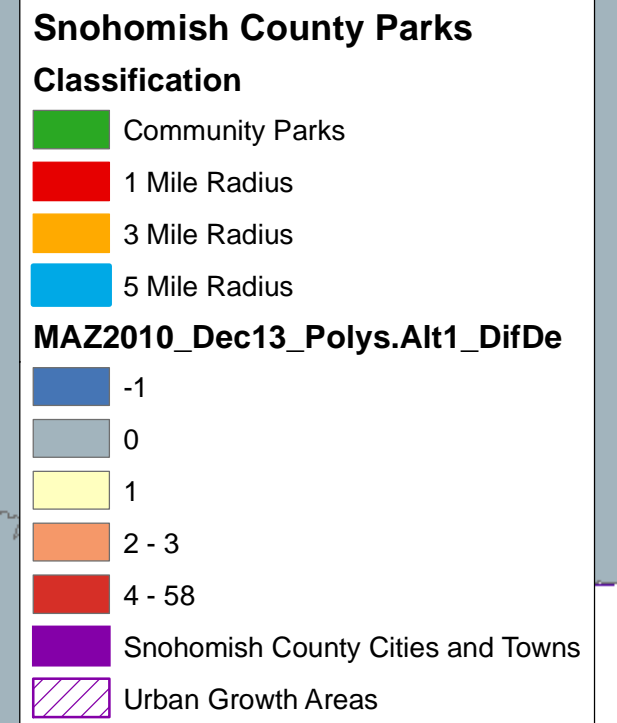
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Date: 6/27/2014



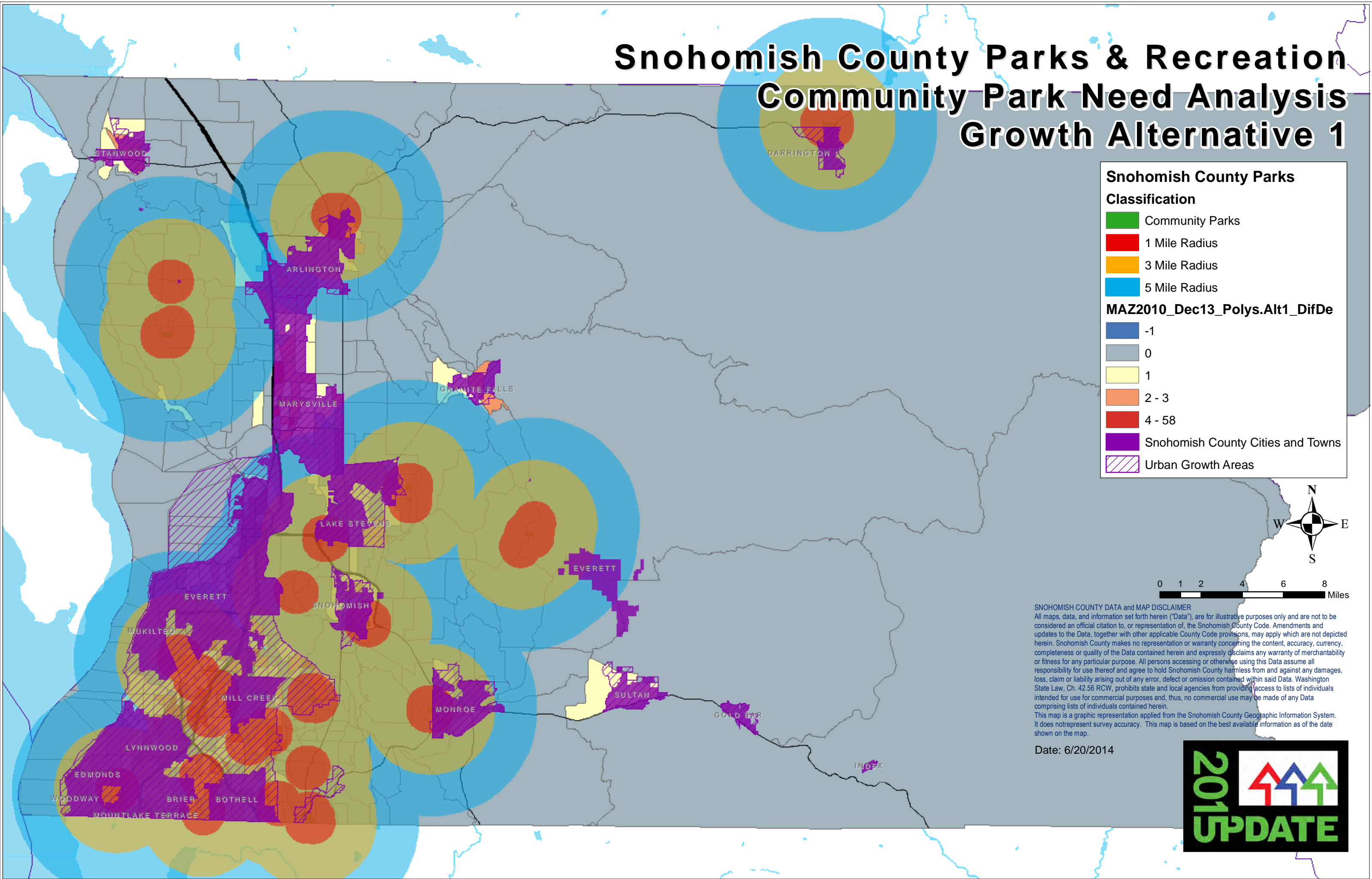
Appendix C - Level-of-Service Analysis

Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Community Park Need Analysis Growth Alternative 1

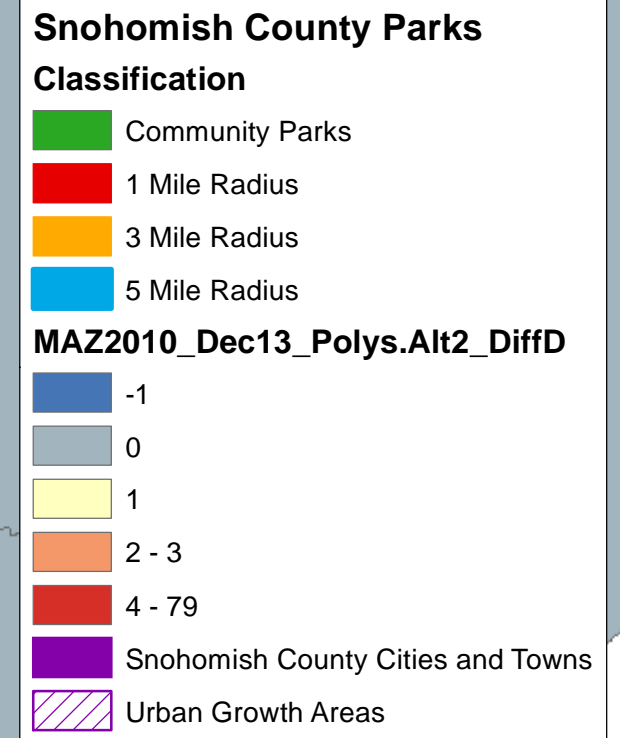


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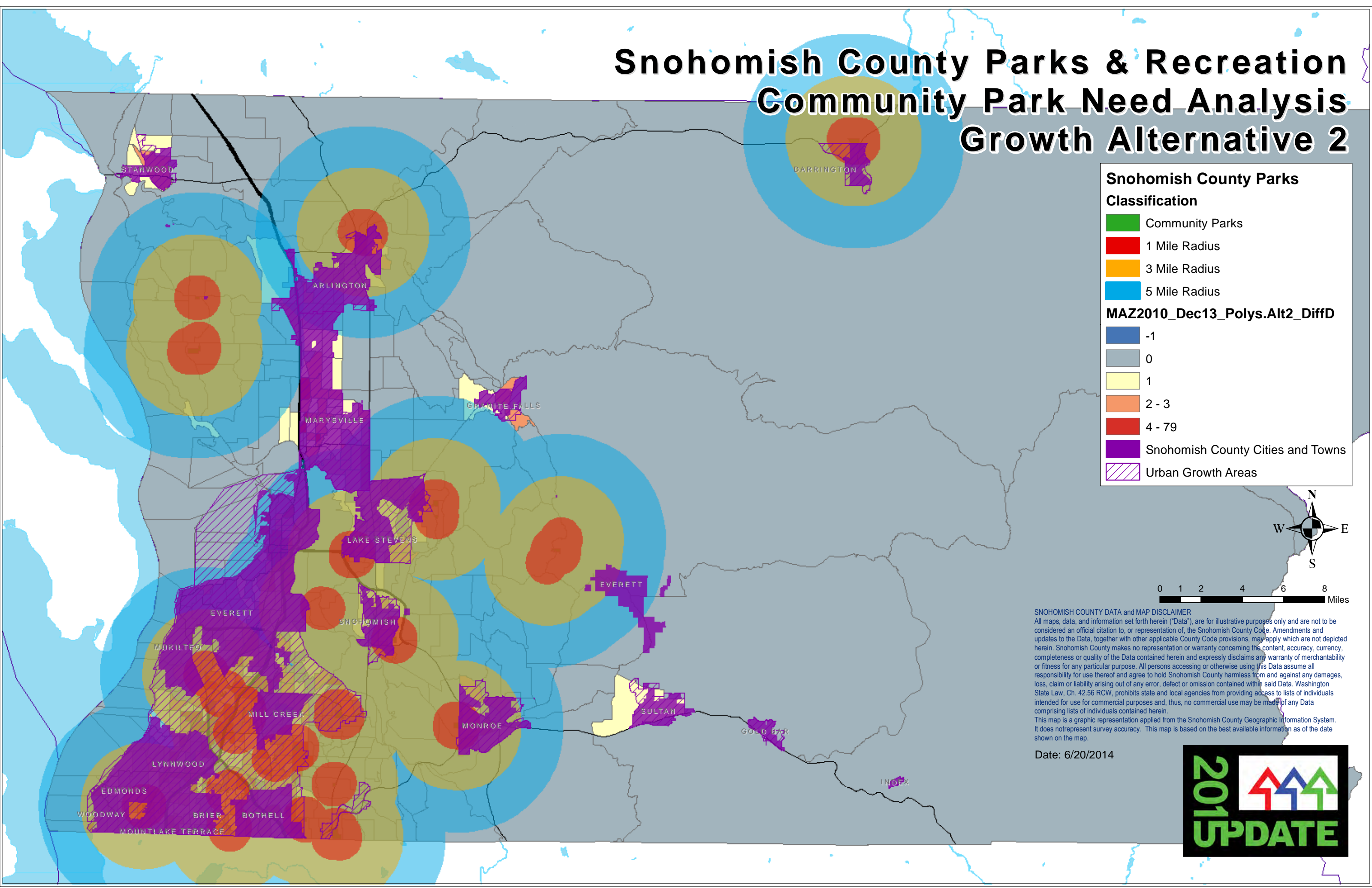


Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Community Park Need Analysis Growth Alternative 2

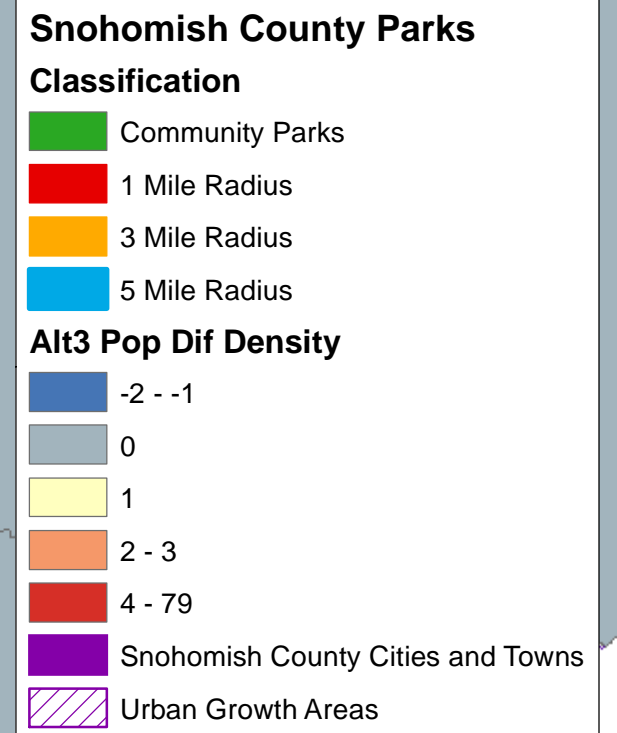


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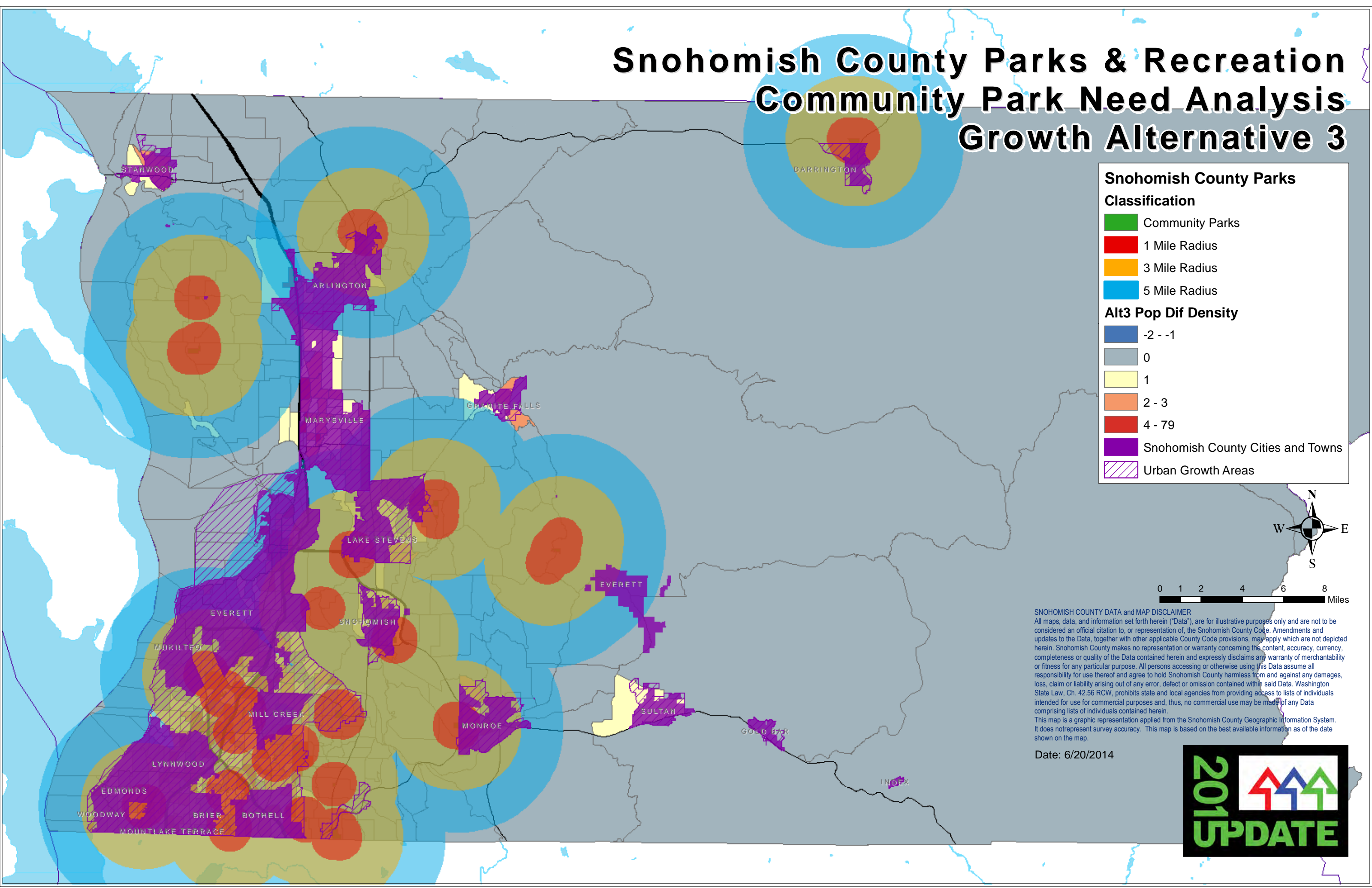


Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Community Park Need Analysis Growth Alternative 3



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Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Park Acquisition - Distance Evaluation LOS Option 2

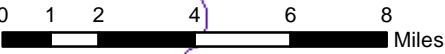
Snohomish County Parks

Snohomish County Parks

Snohomish County Parks Buffer

City and Town Parks

City and Town Park Buffer



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Appendix D – Recommended Park Improvements Maps

Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Community Parks - Acquisition LOS Option 1

**Snohomish County Parks
Classification**

Community

Neighborhood

Open Space/Preserve

Regional

Special Use

Parks smaller than 35 acres

Under Growth Alternatives 2 and 3
two additional Community Parks
will be acquired. Location to be
determined during 2023
Comprehensive Plan update process.

Acquire One
Community Park

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Date: 6/20/2014



Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Camping Improvements

Snohomish County Parks Classification

- Community
- Neighborhood
- Open Space/Preserve
- Regional
- Special Use
- Trail
- Parks smaller than 35 acres

Other Projects:
Make improvements to existing campgrounds as identified and prioritized by Camping Team

Provide additional convenience camping

Provide new camping areas as feasible and appropriate

Develop camping opportunities along the Whitehorse Trail

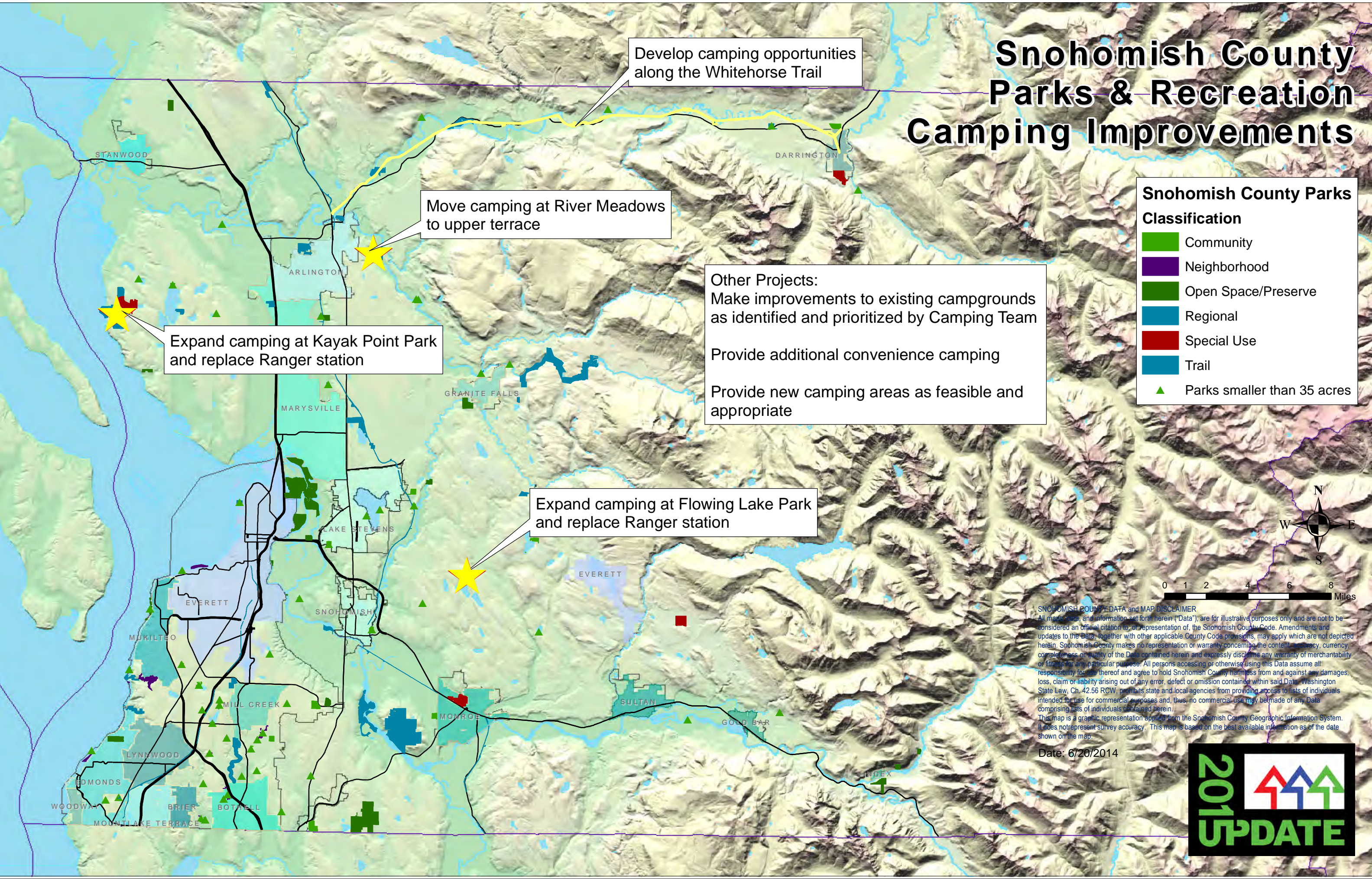
Move camping at River Meadows to upper terrace

Expand camping at Kayak Point Park and replace Ranger station

Expand camping at Flowing Lake Park and replace Ranger station

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Date: 6/20/2014



Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Equestrian Recreation

**Snohomish County Parks
Classification**

- Community
- Neighborhood
- Open Space/Preserve
- Regional
- Special Use
- Trail
- Parks smaller than 35 acres



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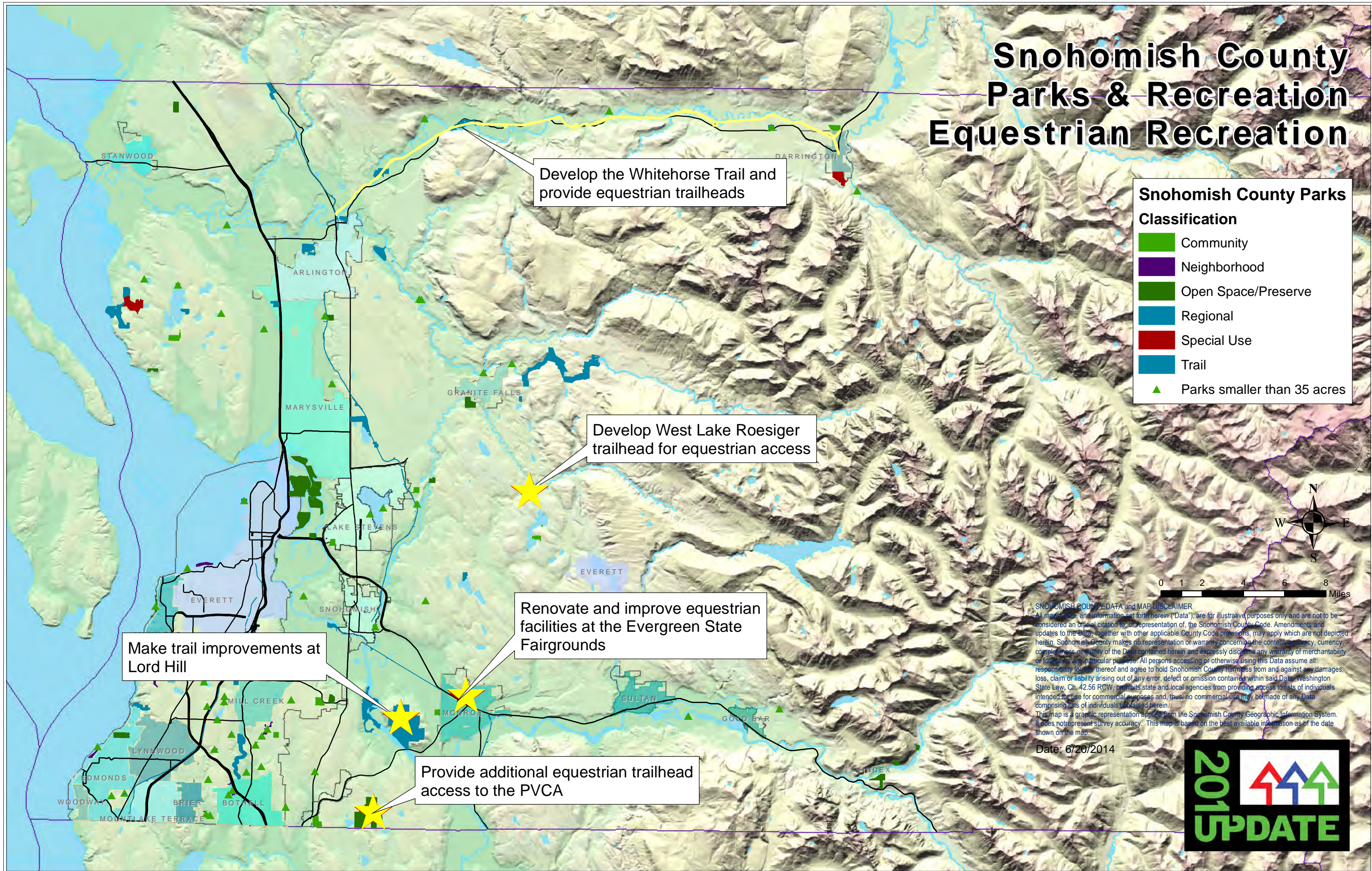
Develop the Whitehorse Trail and provide equestrian trailheads

Develop West Lake Roesiger trailhead for equestrian access

Renovate and improve equestrian facilities at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds

Make trail improvements at Lord Hill

Provide additional equestrian trailhead access to the PVCA



Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Other Facility Improvements

Snohomish County Parks Classification

- Community
- Neighborhood
- Open Space/Preserve
- Regional
- Special Use
- Trail
- Parks smaller than 35 acres

Other Projects:

- * Acquire and develop new aquatic facility
- * Acquire and develop new regional athletic facility
- * Complete system improvements which further the goals of the SOAP
- * Complete life-cycle replacements as identified and prioritized in Parks' Asset Maintenance Plan.
- * Continue ADA accessibility improvements
- * [If LOS Option 2 is selected] Utilize level-of-service methodology to provide improvements to serve additional population at existing parks, when appropriate

Complete master planning for Sky Valley Sportsman's Park and pursue development as appropriate

Complete master planning process for Evergreen State Fairgrounds and complete improvements, as appropriate

Complete annual 180 improvements

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Date: 6/24/2014



Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Renovation Priorities

**Snohomish County Parks
Classification**

Community

Neighborhood

Open Space/Preserve

Regional

Special Use

Trail

Parks smaller than 35 acres

Kayak Point
Regional Park

Wenberg
Regional Park

Flowing Lake
Regional Park

Evergreen State
Fairgrounds

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Date: 6/20/2014



Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Trail Improvements

Snohomish County Parks Classification

- Community
- Neighborhood
- Open Space/Preserve
- Regional
- Special Use
- Trail
- Parks smaller than 35 acres

Other Projects:

- *Identify and develop a connection to the Centennial Trail from the City of Stanwood through the City of Arlington (possible bikeway project)
- *Continue to provide improvements along regional trail corridors to address public-identified priorities
- *Acquire and develop trailheads on all regional trails at a minimum spacing of 2-6 miles apart
- *Provide trail/bikeway connections between public facilities, as feasible
- *Consider and provide paved or soft surface trails at parks, as appropriate

Complete development of the Whitehorse Trail

Develop West Lake Roesiger trailhead

Develop park based trails at Flowing Lake Park

Develop CT spur between Snohomish and Monroe

Develop Reiter Foothills trailhead

Complete trail acquisition and develop

Develop park based trails at Heybrook Ridge

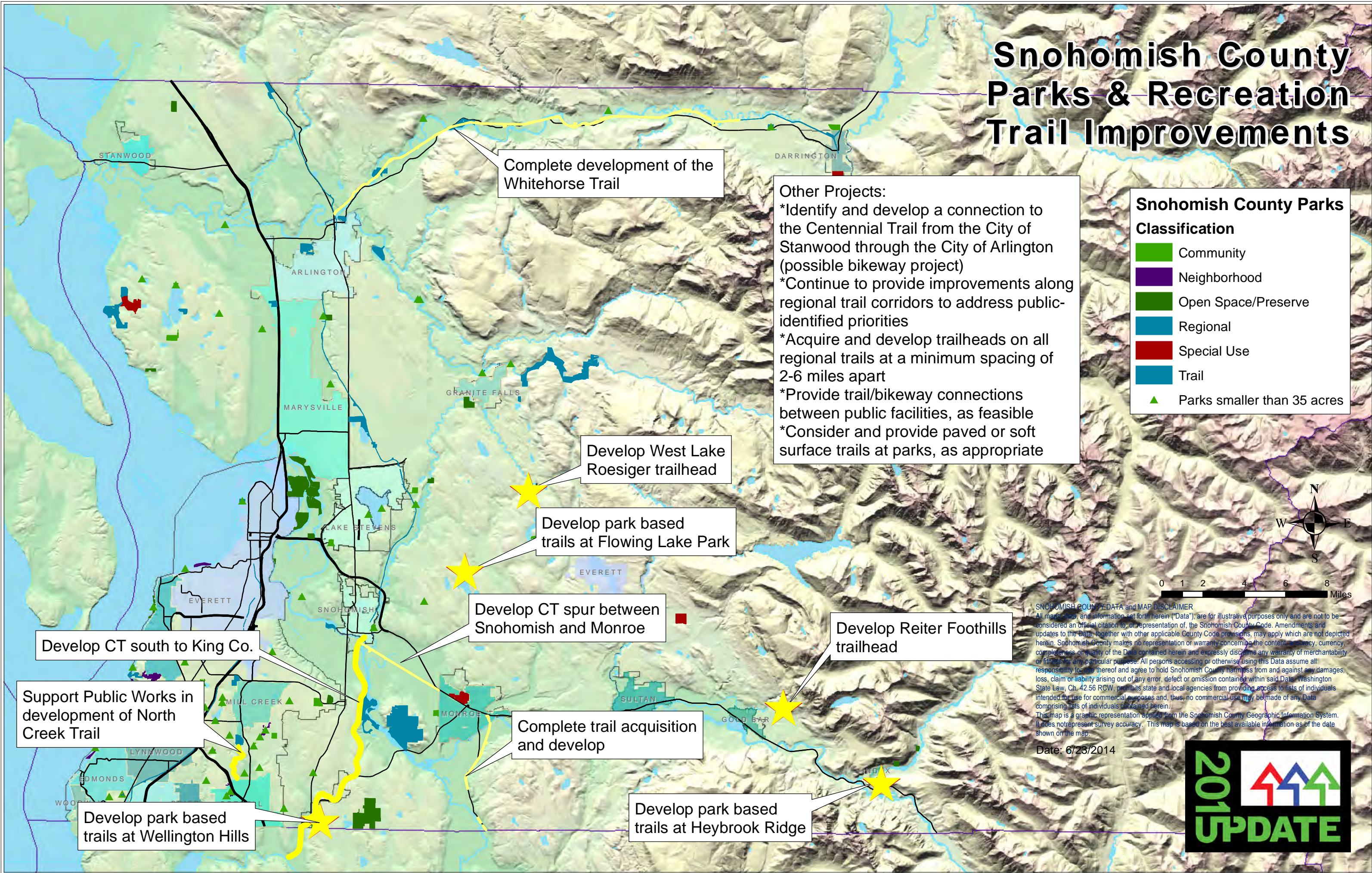
Develop CT south to King Co.

Support Public Works in development of North Creek Trail

Develop park based trails at Wellington Hills

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Date: 6/23/2014



Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Water Access Improvements

Snohomish County Parks Classification

- Community
- Neighborhood
- Open Space/Preserve
- Regional
- Special Use
- Trail
- ▲ Parks smaller than 35 acres

Other Projects:
Acquire additional lake access

Complete Snohomish River
Estuary Recreation Area Plan
and make recommended
improvements

Renovate Kayak Point

Provide additional parking
at Meadowdale Beach Park

Improve water access
at Meadowdale Beach Park

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